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THE REVEREND GEORGE REITH, D.D.,
Moderator of the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland.

DR. GEORGE REITH: A SCOTTISH MINISTRY

By THE REV. W. M. CLOW, D.D.

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TO

MRS. GEORGE REITH,

HIS BELOVED COMPANION

THROUGH THE LONG YEARS

OF HIS MINISTRY

PREFACE

SCOTTISH literature, in its due function of recording the story and interpreting the personalities of history, has done scanty justice to the work and the worth of the ministry. Art has been more discerning and more generous. To stand before Sir George Harvey's Covenanters' Communion, or Sir James Guthrie's Highland Funeral—to select only two instances from a long catalogue—is to realize how deserving of the esteem of the people its ministry has been. But neither Sir Walter Scott, nor John Galt, nor Sir J. M. Barrie, although loyal in his sympathies, has set a single fair portrait on any page. Even Burns, who could describe his priest-like father with a moving ascription, never touched with tender emotion the man who inspired his father's faith. Robert Louis Stevenson has been more generous, and could recognize the far-seeing vision and spiritual passion of John Knox, and pay a tribute to his long line of successors. There is room and need for the portrait of one who represented this ministry in his character and his service.

To understand any personality there is required some knowledge of the times in which he lived out his years. There must be shown his relationship, and even his debt, to his environment, with an estimate of the influences playing upon him in his formative years. For that reason the earlier chapters of this Memoir recall the chief features of the social, educational and religious life of Scotland during the early years of Dr. George Reith's training. It endeavours to estimate their significance in the story of what he was, and what he became. Spending his youth under the bracing discipline of Aberdeen, trained for his vocation in Edinburgh, with its unapproachable beauty and its inspiring traditions, and exercising his ministry in Glasgow, with its cosmopolitan mind, its generous humanities and its evangelical enthusiasm, he became a true representative of that long succession to whom Scotland owes so great a debt. To stand in his noble presence, to mark his native gentlehood and his culture, and to listen to his impassioned delivery of his message, was to see in him one finely typical of his calling.

It is to be regretted that, as some time has elapsed since his death, and the years have seen the passing of many of his intimate friends, few letters of moment and interest are to be found.

That is the more to be regretted because of his distinctive grace as a letter-writer. The loss is made evident by the large number of letters he received, all of which he treasured with a characteristic care. The lack of such materials has been much amended by the painstaking solicitude of his son, Sir J. C. W. Reith, in collecting and arranging the records to whose witness this Memoir is so greatly indebted. It has been written in the hope that it may serve as a memorial to one who was a man greatly beloved, and to be an inspiration to those who have chosen that vocation which he fulfilled with a consecrated fidelity of three-and-fifty years.

GLASGOW,
June, 1928.

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I: THE SCOTTISH CHARACTER

THE Scottish character is a recognized type of moral ideal and religious conviction, with a corresponding attitude towards the realities of life, and a consequent expression in distinctive word and deed. It is disclosed not only in the unrepentant accent of the Scotsman's speech, the persistent energy of his toil, and the saving prudence of his conduct, but in his devotion to the customs of his Fatherland. A casual observer may sometimes think that the travelled Scot has turned his back on the modes and customs of his native soil. And there are instances of the influence of an education at an English University, and of the effect of admission to a social atmosphere unkindly to Scottish use and wont. But there needs to be only one provocative word to arouse the latent loyalty, and to elicit a protest of pride. "It takes three generations," said President Grant, "to transform a Scotsman into an American, and then he is only a Scottish American after all." It was an accepted dictum that President Woodrow Wilson revealed, in his moral sensitiveness and

his self-poised resolves, the convictions and the witness of the Scottish minister whose name he bore.

This abiding and definite character is not an attribute of race. There is no more composite people than the dwellers in North Britain. To anyone conversant with the physical form and the facial features of the people this truth is evident. Pict and Celt, Saxon and Norseman, Hollander and, from Queen Mary's time, Norman, and even the Irish emigrant have all contributed to the membership of this diverse race. As a consequence, hair as fair as yellow flax, as black as the sloe, as straight in its fall as spun silk, and as strong and wiry as that of a native terrier, can be seen in its streets. Yet how single and how unique is the mind of this folk with so many progenitors. How diverse is the Scotsman from his neighbour across the border. One has only to travel from Annan to Carlisle to find the testimony, not merely of outward appearance, but of custom and habit and conviction. To cross the bridge at Coldstream is to be aware, in a few minutes, that one has passed to mingle with another people. Even to walk in the streets of Berwick-on-Tweed—that town annexed, to its own loss, to an English county—is to realize that the Scottish character

along with the Scottish speech, no longer prevails. Whence comes the difference? It is due to the absence of the forces which created the character.

Now the claim made here is that this accepted Scottish character has been fashioned and indeed created, by the ministry of the Scottish Church. The distinctive type, which is clearly recognized, dates only from the Reformation and its almost absolute conquest of the whole land. Doubtless personal feuds, aggressive invasions, ruthless spoliations, so universal among all neighbours, and especially in those both north and south of the border in the past centuries, had provoked keen and abiding antagonisms. But until the Reformation of Religion, which was, as always, the Renaissance of the mind as well as of the soul, quickened a passion for liberty and for truth, there was no definite demarcation between North and South. The monks of Lindisfarne were given a kindly reception. The names of their simple missionaries were dear to the people, and they are still imprinted on the nomenclature of many a lovely valley, where they built their abbeys and called forth the affection of devout believers. Margaret, Malcolm Canmore's queen, was given a cordial welcome by the Scottish people, and

she made the influence of her eager spirit evident as far west as Iona. England might have extended to the strath beyond the Ochils as Laud openly and doggedly endeavoured to secure. But when the Reformation issued in the formation of the Scottish ministry, and when that ministry claimed and secured liberty to preach the Reformed faith to the people, and to educate and discipline the mind in the truths of the gospel, then the Scot all the world knows came into being, and he lives and speaks in character under every sun.

This Scottish ministry, like all articulated and potent agencies, is an evolution. The first outstanding fact of the Scottish Reformation was the abolition of the priest and the confessional, the monk and his cell. The proverb, "Pull down the nests, and the rooks will flee away" may not be ascribed to any personality. But it condenses, in a homely figure, the Scottish mind. The counsel was not obeyed with the organized and pitiless brutality of the reprisals of Laud. But the ruins of many stately and venerable abbeys, always built in places of charm and beauty, indicate the deep determination of the Scottish people to change the form and the function of the Christian ministry. The Reformed Church found its way to its necessary

ministry, and to the meaning and scope of its functions, by developing and adapting its officers to meet the requirements of the accepted doctrine, and the altered ideal of the Christian life. In the development of the requisite functions it was inspired and guided by the young scholars who had sat at the feet of the noble teachers of the Continent. They came back with convictions, which held their whole minds, regarding the constitution of the Christian church, and the status and function of its ministers. It was no individual protest which led Cardinal Beaton to strike at Patrick Hamilton, and to make him the first martyr of the Reformed faith in Scotland. Beaton discerned that a new and dangerous force was moving the Scottish mind. But the light had arisen, the leaven was working in men's souls, and the Scottish Reformers were spending their strength in the evolution of the Scottish ministry.

The first evidence of the effect of this endeavour was seen in the act of George Wishart, the minister of Dundee, to call in the help of the men of light and leading in his flock, and to institute the office of the elder. These elders were not in succession to those so named in the Authorized Version of the English New Testament. The New Testament elders filled the

same office as the apostles. The clear distinction between them was that they had not "seen and companied with the Lord Jesus" as the apostles had done. But the Scottish elders were a new order, in sympathetic succession to the rulers of the Jewish synagogue, with similar functions. Yet the eager Christian minds of the day saw that there was one need more urgent than that of elders in a congregation. It was John Knox, George Wishart's adoring disciple, who was the founder of the order of the Scottish ministry. He had learned his lesson at Calvin's feet. He had discerned, as he taught, that the minister of the Scottish Church, and of every Biblical Church, traces his succession back to the New Testament presbyters. He saw in Calvin the ideal realized. He declared that Scotland's need was to have a trained, self-disciplined and consecrated man in every inhabited centre. The urgent need of the time was a man of clear knowledge, and devout faith, to preach the word, to administer the sacraments, and to discipline the people. As Knox looked abroad over Scotland, and realized the need of its people, there swelled in him that passion to send forth into what were then, regions beyond, this trained and cultured man to create a new Scotland. "The Scot derives

in essence from the strict and unbreakable spirit of that great educationist, John Knox, who laid down and maintained the canon, that it should be lawful for men to use themselves in matters of religion and conscience as they should answer to their Maker." [1]

Upon John Knox then we may safely fasten as the dominant personality in the creation of the Scottish ministry. Despite the keen criticism which certain schools of literature have passed upon him and his mind and spirit, he remains the Scottish ideal. Wherever Scotsmen emigrate, whether they make their clearing in the bush of distant colonies, or build their cities beside the broad rivers of rapidly developing lands, they have made it a first concern to secure a minister of the great Scotsman's lineage, to build a place of prayer for his ministry, and to baptize it with Knox's name. Robert Louis Stevenson's discerning sketch may not do justice to Knox's mind. He is certainly less appreciative of Knox's ideals than he ought to be, by reason of what we now know to be his own resolved rebellion against the Puritans. But he leaves the reader in no doubt as to the force and courage, the insight and the foresight, of Knox's convictions, and the irresistible momen-

[1] Rudyard Kipling, *A Book of Words*, p. 192.

tum of his energy as a Scottish minister with its consequent impression on the public mind. Knox's conception was enlarged and applied by his notable successors. Andrew Melville vindicated the authority of the office within its own sphere in the face even of a king. Alexander Henderson exalted and declared its independence, apart from the sanction of any temporal power which it might respect. William Carstairs, after the tragic years of prelatic persecution, secured the legal recognition of the relationship of minister and people, with a perfect freedom of action, so that a fair prospect of a Scotland evangelized under a ministry secure in the affection of the people, rose before him. And had it not been for that outrage upon the people of a Christian communion, which denied their right of choosing their spiritual guide, the story of the Scottish Church, under this clearly recognized and devotedly accepted ministry, might have been one of the most glorious pages in the history of the gospel. But in 1707 there was passed that Act of Patronage which reversed the trend of a century and a half, and resulted in the filling of the charges of the Church with ministers, too often with habits as dissolute as those of their patrons. Yet the conception of the Christian ministry,

whose development can be so briefly traced, remained steadfast in the minds of the people. They gathered together in simple Praying Societies, always with the definite purpose of building a humble house of prayer, and of calling a Christian minister, under whose message and guidance the Christian character would be attained.

There is one proof of the historic influence of the Scottish ministry which lies open on the map of Scotland. A rectangle can be drawn, of a length which reaches almost across Scotland, within whose lines the Scottish ministry did not function. There the recognized Scottish character is not to be found. That rectangular area begins at Braemar, and definitely on the west side of the River Dee. Its southern line would pass through Fort Augustus. Its northern would run across Scotland south of Inverness. The western boundary is the Atlantic. Within the limits, demarked by this rectangle, the Reformed faith was almost unknown. The Christian minister was strange to the people. The Romish Church has maintained its supremacy, among the scattered folk of this region through all the centuries. There are clear reasons which explain this anomaly in Presbyterian Scotland. For one thing, these

remote glens and moors and islands were inaccessible, to even daring travellers among their wilds. No roads passed through their borders. The voyagers by sea to the west coast, on to South Uist, which is predominantly Romish, had to face the stormy winds in petty fishing boats. For another thing their priests were devout, simple-minded, upright godly men, and they fulfilled a kindly ministry in both chapel and school. What other lands had suffered under the domination of shameful pope and ungodly priest was unknown to these remote loyalists to the Church. The third factor was the devotion of the Celt to his chief. The clansman not only throbs with a passion for the clan, but with a joy in his subjection to its head. Even farther north, in a district somewhat distant from this stretch of country, in Strathconan, where the Frasers of Lovat remained Romanists, the people also maintained their allegiance to the Romish faith. English historians have sometimes wondered that Prince Charlie found so many adherents, and secured the devotion of so many unquestioning supporters, in this stretch of north-west Scotland. But that Romish attachment and its subjection to Roman authorities, which made the Stuart name abhorrent in Lowland ears, gave it

sanctity to the devotees beside these lonely lochs and in the distant isles. To this day there are priests with distinctive Scottish names, serving their Church in many lands, who trace their birth and lineage to the dwellers in this Romish enclosure. But mark the clear and distinctive result. Among these peoples the recognized type of Scottish character with its ideals and convictions, its independence and steadfastness, its loyalty to freedom both in faith and worship, is unknown. The Scottish character was never born within the soul, or manifested without in the life, where the Scottish minister's voice was not heard.

Now this claim does not imply that while the minister has been the greatest force in the formation of the Scottish character, he exercised his function alone, or by any authority of his own office. George Wishart's institution of the eldership is the sufficient disproof of this supposition. Now and again there are self-important men who make this blunder, and both " the good cause " of religion has suffered, and the self-assertive man has met his due penalty. Knox's ideal was, not only a minister in every parish, but a school with teachers loyal to the doctrine of the faith, and eager to teach the children through the whole course of a

notable education. It is difficult to overstate the vast and abiding influence of the parish schools. Their teachers were almost always men of unusual ability. Some of them were scholars of such exact grammatical attainment, and of such wide reading, that they passed from the charge of the parish school to the chair of a university. The teacher was the colleague of the minister, and they served together in the most intimate and co-operative unity. In many cases the master of the school was not only a graduate of the university, but he was himself preparing for the ministry. The result of this happy common service was that not only the message of the gospel, but the whole truth of the Christian ideal, was proclaimed, and the children on all days of the week were under the influence of a ministry both of teaching and of discipline. The most arresting testimony to this fact has been engrossed in a well-known phrase of Sir Harry Lauder's minting. All the world to-day realizes not only the genius, but the keen insight and the native gift of expression in the Scottish vernacular, with which he has been endowed. His discerning hearers accept him as the embodiment of the Scottish character, garbed no doubt after his own method, but with a perfect under-

standing of the Scottish mind. His dictum that the source of the Scottish ideal of a life of uprightness and of honour is "the kirk, the schule, and the catechism" touches the truth to the quick. It has been said that the people, who listened to him as he spoke in his simple unaffected appeal, flashed with the quick recognition of its truth. There is to-day a tendency to separate the Church and the school. There is in certain quarters a disfavour on the part of the teacher to the minister. It has no doubt some reasons behind it in the history of the past years. It is sometimes affected by political ideals, and sometimes by a question of comparative status. But the people of Scotland have little sympathy with this alienation. They believe, with the popular Scottish balladist, that the three forces of "the kirk, the school and the catechism"—although this last needs some dealing with its length and stringency—should still be recognized in the education of the people. In spite of influences which are adverse, the people still choose Christian ministers, to serve on the public authorities in education. They realize that while knowledge is a supreme need, the creation of a certain moral character is a greater necessity.

This thesis of the influence of the Christian

ministry in the creation of the Scottish character has been set down with its brief allusions because it opens the door of introduction to one who fulfilled this function in a rare degree. No other words so adequately describe George Reith, who held the charge, for more than half a century, of the College Church in Glasgow, as "a Christian minister." There are rôles ably filled by many, who have been ordained to serve in the gospel, which he did not attempt to fill. He was not equipped in mind or temper to be a wary and adroit leader of assemblies. He had no deep-seated delight in serving on committees where plans and projects are discussed and adjusted. He had little ambition to take part in the common and necessary functions of Church courts. Their oversight of congregations, their adjustment of agencies, their resolving of problems, their settlement of controversies, held his watchful interest, but he did not feel called upon to spend his strength in such service. He did not covet the privilege of forming a member of the many deputations which Church life in Scotland seems to require. To have become a Presbytery clerk, and to have ranked himself along with the makers of ecclesiastical laws, or the propagandists of ecclesiastical policies, was alien to his mind and

temperament. He never sought prominence on a public platform, although that sometimes fell to him as a call he did not refuse. Yet he did not hold himself aloof from those who served. He often expressed his respect for them and understood the cost of time and strength, and even of fitness for other services, which the fulfilment of these duties involved. He never used the words of scorn which are sometimes heard. He sat in the Church courts, often silent, always respectful and eagerly attentive, when men of requisite gift for affairs argued their points and moved their motions. Yet when he could be induced so to serve his Church, to which he was so loyal, those who acted with him were always impressed by his knowledge, his grace of speech, his sincerity, together with an often surprising balance of judgment in public questions. There were words and deeds at which he moved uneasily, and sometimes felt compelled to utter a protest. Only when deeply stirred did his moral protest break out in speech. When any suggestion or procedure, or course of action touched his keen sense of honour, or his absolute devotion to truth, he was instant and decisive in word and deed.

But what he was in the deepest secret of his

heart, in the values which he cherished and in the whole course of his life, can be summed up as "a Christian minister." His controlling passion was to serve his Master, Christ. His supreme joy was found in bringing men and women to his Master's feet, and in enlarging their knowledge, increasing their faith, and deepening their love until they became steadfast disciples of his Lord. A student friend of many years standing once remarked that those who attended George Reith's ministry had recalled to their minds, ever and again, the great personalities of the preachers of the past. They were sometimes reminded of Knox's urgent appeal and of his fearless and vehement protestations. They would remember Melville's unflinching courage in facing men of high station and of rebuking even the King in defence of spiritual freedom. They would hear him, when some question of Christ's crown and covenant arose, speaking with as clear a vision and as confident a tone as Henderson when master of the Assembly. But, he added, "George Reith had passed through the waters of a baptism which gave him a note not often heard in the speech of these stalwart defenders of the faith." That statement had a more definite basis than the speaker was aware of.

It was in those years when a widespread revival of religious life stirred so many lands that young Reith entered into that devotion to Christ and that submission to His Divine personality which governed all his years. From that day grace was found upon his lips as often as he spoke of his Lord and there was reverence in the core of his being which those who knew him best understood.

Now the outstanding consequence of such a ministry fulfilled by such a man was the power to create and to discipline the Christian character—in its marked Scottish presentation. The men and women of the College Church, throughout the half century of his service, were notable for their assured faith, their devoutness in worship, their service in sacrifice in office and gift. To make up the long roll of its office-bearers throughout the years of his pastorate is to find the names of men eminent in all the professions, leaders in the business and commerce of the city, foremost in its philanthropies among the poor and the outcast, and inspirers of its social and intellectual life. As George Reith rose in his pulpit, with his reverent and often awe-possessed air, to lead his people in worship, he looked out on an assembly, it is not too much to say, of unique religious devo-

tion. Its leading men were known in the gate for their ability in the management of public affairs, for the spending of their strength and time in organizing and supporting the many ministries to the needy, and for their resourcefulness in carrying on the agencies which cared for the fallen and endeavoured to win the wandering to ways of chastity. There sat before him professors in the Colleges, masters of high standing in the training of those engaged in the technical arts of the city, and teachers of all ranks intent on the education of the child. Not only so but along with them were to be found the hard-pressed men and women, sometimes of lowly estate, who passed within the house of prayer to seek strength for their time of weakness and light in the darkness falling around them. Along with these there were young and ardent spirits, students in all the faculties of learning, and entrants into the paths which have led them to positions of prominence and power, who were given, now an inspiring message of warning and restraint as they faced a tempting world, and again a rousing appeal of loyalty to the highest. Men whose names have gained a world-wide fame as masters of scholarship, and as preachers of the Gospel, and leaders in the rescue work of a noble dis-

cipleship to the Captain of their salvation, were led into their dedication to their ministries, by this shepherd of the flock. Their witness abides, alike in their personal testimony, in their contributions to the defence of the faith, and in the organizations, of which all the world is aware, still serving in their strength among us.

It was this deep and abiding effect of the Scottish ministry which arrested the observant mind of Wordsworth, and led him to the source of its vitality, although he interpreted it with an English, and not wholly discerning, mind, when he wrote,

> "The Scottish Church, both on himself and those
> With whom, from childhood, he grew up, had held
> The strong hand of her purity; and still
> Had watched him with an unrelenting eye.
> This he remembered in his riper age
> With gratitude, and reverential thoughts." [1]

So George Reith held his people with the strong hand of his purity, and the still more compelling message of his grace. His private counsels, his tender sympathy in time of trouble, his solicitous help in an hour of need, created an atmosphere in which his fearless word was heard with a responsive regard, and the entreating appeal was carried into the secret

[1] "The Excursion: The Wanderer."

place of the soul. The result was the creation and discipline of the Scottish character. As Principal Denney, a worshipper in the College Church through all the years of his academic service, bore confirming witness to the General Assembly: "He was one who made his ministry great, in that he found the task of preaching so absorbing and so sublime, that it left no room for any rival interest than to lead men into the secret of the Lord, that they might be conformed to his likeness."

II: A GOODLY HERITAGE

GEORGE REITH was born in the city of Aberdeen on 9th July 1842, ten months before that Disruption which rent the Church of Scotland in twain. As he was wont to say, he was not free-born, but he was carried in his mother's arms into the Free Church of Scotland. This circumstance he sometimes professed to himself gave him a more kindly and tolerant feeling toward the Church of Scotland, although he was unswervingly loyal to the principles of his own communion. He was the second surviving son of a family notable in the business life and the religious activities of the community. His father, George Reith, was a man of distinctive features, in every sense of the term. He became associated with a band of devout men, who were leading members of the Free South Church, and were eager in the philanthropies of the city. His elder brother became a physician with a large practice, but he was even more conspicuous for his interest in the social and religious education of the young, and especially in those who lived in the closely

crowded dwellings of the East End. He established a large mission school in the Gallowgate, enlisted a numerous band of consecrated fellow-workers, and built an Institute, admirably planned, with an equipment and with methods of approach and appeal far in advance of their time. His sister, as deeply interested in the redemptive work of the Christian Church, became the wife of the Rev. George D. Low, one of his fellow-students, well known as the minister of the Candlish Memorial Church in Edinburgh.

To understand any man of resolved character we must learn not only of his lineage and associates, but understand the environment in which he lived and the atmosphere moral and intellectual which he breathed. The impact of the associates of his youth had their own influence. But still more powerful was the influence of the communal life and moral ideal of so compact and distinctive a city as Aberdeen. Even more determining, in his case as in every other, was the almost unconscious potency of the personalities who early engaged his mind and secured his reverence. If we can make up a just estimate of these forces we can interpret the events of his life, and we have the key to his character. He himself became so fully

aware of what he owed to these various sources of impression, and he felt the debt so deeply, that he was accustomed to say, in a tone of intense gratitude, " The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places ; yea, I have a goodly heritage."

It is a signal advantage to be born and schooled in Aberdeen. It must also be recognized that by a law, both of nature and of grace, of the flesh and of the spirit, there is a covetable gain in being transplanted to another soil, while the pulses of growth are still throbbing in the veins. Yet the bracing air, both from the sea and the wind-swept uplands, the keen intellectual interest of its citizens, and the will to face the realities of life at all costs, make this northern city a sphere of stimulating discipline. Every visitor is surprised at its fairness and charm. It is a common confession of those who walk its streets for the first time that they had not been told of the attractiveness and fascination which it possesses. Its common dwelling-places have an unusual massive simplicity and cleanness of aspect, and its public buildings delight the eye both by their upstanding boldness, and their charm of outline. Its citizens have taken advantage of its natural resources, and have dealt boldly with

the impediments to the realization of their ideal. Old Aberdeen, with its venerable University and its austere and worshipful Cathedral, keeps its form, an ancient and secluded little town, in a situation of picturesque beauty, near to the mouth of the Don. But the modern city of Aberdeen, at the mouth of the Dee—two miles south of the Don—has no impressive natural distinction, and cannot claim to be invested with either hill or valley of especial note. It was once a little riverside village, fittingly named Footdee, beside the shifting sands, and very near to the mouth of the river. But it has been enlarged and transformed by eager and adventurous minds into a city of broad streets, tree-lined avenues, and far-reaching roads. The once shallow port of shelter from the keen winds of the North Sea has become a harbour for a far-borne commerce. Upon its rude and narrow causeways, with their diverging "Gates" and "Rows" there has been imposed a broad city of comely squares and finely-planned terraces. Aided by the unstainable beauty of its native granite, when it is seen, whether under the sunlight of a cloudless summer morning, or in the clear moonlight of a winter night, the city well deserves its apostrophe of praise. As Dr. George Reith

himself has written, "No city is exactly like Aberdeen. No street is like Union Street. No river like the Dee. No shore like the sands between the Dee and the Don. No breakwater like the North Pier stretching out its strong, sheltering bulwark against the storm. No college is like Marischal and King's. Aberdeen is the silver city by the sea." To live within it is to have the opportunity of a liberal education in the power of a chaste and ordered art. It has inspired, by its noble simplicities, a school of painters, who have made their name known in the world, by the purity and grace of their portraiture.

But however willingly the visitor may commend the city of Aberdeen, its name has been associated in recent years with many humorous recitals intended to illustrate a reproachful carefulness in spending, which passes beyond thrift and approaches parsimony. These kindly jests are nowhere more appreciated than among the people of the city itself. There is a certain basis for the characteristic feature they profess to illustrate. The native Aberdeen mind mocks at any slackness of dealing in business, or any indifference to the cost of the means of life, and especially of luxury. This feature was fostered by the fact that until recent years there was no

great degree of wealth among its people. But it was supported by a contempt for any showy display, or sentimental expenditure, or braggart profusion. Self-control, and its twin virtue self-restraint, are graces with its people. Every evangelist who has visited the city has learned that he faces audiences, who sit with a chastened stillness, as they listen with eyes that search the speaker through and through. No emotional appeal will move these well-poised men and women to rise and " expose " themselves, even under deep conviction. Even sorrow is always reticent in word and shrinks from any display. Impulse plays a small part in all their modes of expression. But most decisive of all is the deep and resolved respect for *value* in all expenditure and achievement. The man who pays for any article more than its real worth, who does not count the cost of the mere furnishings of life, who does not keep his tastes within the limit of what he can well afford, is regarded as a trivial creature. Self-respect in such regards compels a watchful prudence.

But no one should think that there is any taint of meanness in this approved consideration. The solicitous and profuse expenditure on the charities of the city, the number and equipment of its Hospitals and Homes, the

immediate and generous support of every philanthropic agency, and the abounding generosity towards the missionary enterprises of the Christian faith—these reveal the spirit of the people. In the many unselfish hospitalities of the community to the poor and the castaway there is the devising of the liberal heart, and the gift of the generous hand. To enter the quadrangle of Marischal College, rebuilt and enlarged of recent years, to inspect its stately buildings, and to mark their fine equipment for their purpose, and to remember that it is all the gift of the people of the city, is to smile at these clever quips of the wayside observer. Or, to stand before the United Free South Church—the congregation to which the family of Dr. George Reith belonged—with its lofty dome and pillared portico, and to realize that it was built entirely from the resources of its members, and that the collection on its opening day approached the sum of £700, moved by the clear resolve of beginning a new era in the history of the Church with its place of worship free of debt, is to understand and appreciate the spirit which throbs in the natives of the city. Few Christian congregations anywhere cherish such an ideal, and fewer fulfil it. It is no mean grace to attain it.

The most distinctive feature of the communal life of the city is not to be found in the stimulating effect of its appealing fairness, or in the keen sense of values in the minds of the people. That is revealed in the passion for education, with a clear conception of the part which a disciplined mind plays in life. The city of Aberdeen has been the seat and centre of a long sustained historical intellectual life. It lies so far north that it was for many years isolated from the more populous shires of the south. As a consequence it early attained a civic and social importance unusual for a city of its size, with consequent opportunities and obligations. Like a magnet it drew to itself the ability, the energy and the impelling ambition of the surrounding counties. Its greatest enrichment was the constant inflow of young men of promise with high personal ideals. These renewed the physical and the moral robustness of the people, and quickened the pulse of their intellectual life. This inflow from the surrounding counties, and even from the more distant Highland shires, increased its wealth, encouraged its commerce, and also broadened the mind of the people. The immediate hinterland of the city had its own subtle and refining influence. The loveliness of Deeside, which caught and held the

heart of Queen Victoria, and still allures visitors from afar, and the more restrained pastoral appeal of Donside, which has been set to moving music in Hamewith, together with the grip and hold of the broad lands which stretch beyond Bennachie to the Moray Firth, furthered the growth and enriched the inner life of its people.

The inevitable result of these forces, enlarging and stimulating the mind of the community, was a universal devotion to the interests of the higher education. The most enriching gift of the surrounding counties was not the produce of their fields, or the inspiration of their beauty. It was the constant stream of young men and women, not only to enter the industries, but to be schooled in the learning of the city, and thereby to be equipped for mastery in the arena of life. In no other city has the University occupied so signal a place in the minds of those who enter its gates. These young, country-bred youths came from the singularly efficient schools of the little towns and villages, dowered with a habit of untiring diligence, and eager to enter upon a still more exacting self-denial. Here is this small northern sea-coast town, with its background of a few counties filled with a hardy peasant folk, equipping itself to receive into its seminaries, its more ambitious

academies and public schools, and finally its two Colleges, the young and eager aspirants for a thorough and, especially, a classical education. The tradition of many centuries had conspired, with many other circumstances, to create this thirst not only for scholarship, but for distinction in it. It was in 1494, when Edinburgh did not yet dream of giving a University education, that the walls of King's College were raised. But that College was given over to a classical and theological scholarship. It did not meet the mind, and the more practical necessities, of the townsmen of the new and growing city by the Dee. In 1593 these citizens founded Marischal College and gave a new opportunity to those young and eager spirits, craving to wear the red cloak of the undergraduate, and to receive an equipment which would enable them to make their mark in the world—so often in regions far beyond Aberdeen.

No more typically Scottish story can be told than that of the years of self-denial, the nights and days of strenuous application, and the dauntless continuance in an uncomplaining struggle with adverse circumstances. The sons of the well-to-do citizens entered the classrooms under the usual easy conditions of most modern University students. But there sat beside them

lads from the country, who endured a confessed poverty, wore garments which reflected the simple homes from which they came, and gave themselves to their absorbing toil with pride, allured by a horizon of distinction. The lists of the fellow-students of George Reith contain the names of many of assured social position, but they also record the even larger numbers who came from lowly homes, and were dependent on some scanty bursary to pay the College fees. Yet how often have these young men made their names known not only in the intellectual life of Scotland, but in the service of the State. Those who will read the lives of Professor A. B. Davidson of Edinburgh, a master of the Hebrew language and its literature, or of William Robertson Smith, the Orientalist of world-wide reputation, or of that more amazing man, William Robertson Nicoll, with his wide range of knowledge and his superb power of literary expression, will have this wondrous story told. To learn that Professor Davidson's mother sometimes walked the twenty miles that lay between her humble home and the city, carrying the week's provision for her son's simple sustenance, in order that she might add the cost of her fare to his bare purse, is to have the truth set out with simplicity, and yet with a

revelation of love and of sacrifice which is more moving than romance.

Such an environment, such an atmosphere, and such a discipline may do much to transform the ideals and to minister to the ambitions of a young man. But there always is required something more than a school, or a vivid city life, to quicken the inner mind and to consecrate the spirit to a high ideal. What is required is a personality with power to impress the imagination, and to engage the will, so that every energy shall be bent to meet the high demands of a school of learning. That is the experience which lies open to anyone who would read the evidence engrossed in a long course of letters, most of them too intimate to be set before men's eyes, through which George Reith passed. That potent personality was his father, to whom he bore so strong a resemblance, not only in the frame of his body, but in the energy of his mind. His mother, Jean Stuart, who came from Tomintoul, in Banffshire, was of Highland descent, and from her he inherited that strain of brooding Celtic mysticism which was so often revealed in the prayers and the tender emotions of her son. But it was in the life of the home, under the personality of the father he revered, that young George Reith grew from childhood into

youth, quickening year by year under the influences of the city and its life, and still more, through the appeal of what both school and College could do. As often as he recalled his father and all he had been to him—and that was never done lightly or passingly—he uttered some word of grateful regard.

Dr. George Reith's father, after whom he was named, was true to one of the finer types of the Scottish race. He belonged to a family whose early history was lived out within the "twal' mile roun' Aberdeen" of the popular proverb. Coming originally from Durris on Deeside, his ancestors migrated to the parish of Fetteresso on the sea-coast of Kincardineshire. Thence they passed to the adjoining parish of Dunnottar. The modern health-resort of Stonehaven spreads itself across the border-line of these two parishes. George the elder was born in 1811 in Invercarron, under the shadow of Dunnottar Castle. Early in life he found his way to Aberdeen, with keen ambitions already quickening his spirit. He had the purpose of entering the profession of the law, and he found an opening in the office of Messrs. Adam & Anderson, who were among the leading advocates in the city. They were solicitors for the Aberdeen and Forfar Railway, which was then

in process of construction. They soon discovered the business ability, the untiring energy, and the almost prophetic foresight of their young employee. He was appointed as secretary to the Railway Company, and after he had proved his mastery of the developing situation, he was promoted to be its manager, with a perfect trust in his honesty and resourcefulness. Under his unresting vigilance, and far-seeing enterprise, many adjustments were made, leading to the movement by which the railway lines were co-ordinated, until at last Aberdeen became the centre of the railway system, so that it was brought into touch with the larger world both north and south.

His repute carried his name far beyond Aberdeen, with the result that in 1858, in his forty-seventh year, he was offered and accepted the post of manager of the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada. That was an opening which promised an attractive future. He left Aberdeen in January, 1859, and his wife, his son George, and his daughter, followed some short time after. But after some months of service he found that his foresight was not appreciated at its value, and his inflexible honesty was put to the strain. The directors refused to sanction the economies he proposed, and to conduct the

line as he suggested. He made his urgent protests, but they were not respected. When a balance sheet was prepared which he considered to be inaccurate and misleading, he refused to sign it. Rather than submit in this regard he resigned his post. It was an act of characteristic and costly courage, and, while he never regretted his decision, he often confessed, in his later days, that his going to Canada was a mistake that might have marred his whole life. He took the opportunity, before he returned with his family to Aberdeen, to make a tour, accompanied by his son George, through a large number of the cities of the United States. That was a rare and an enlarging experience for a growing youth in his seventeenth year, and it bred an abiding love of travel in his mind.

The man who had made his name known in Aberdeen did not need to wait long for a sphere of service. When the Clyde Navigation Trust was in need of a general manager, the discerning Glasgow merchants, charged with the development of the river as a harbour, realized that among all the applicants for the post there was no one of such evident fitness as the former manager of the Aberdeen railways. He came to Glasgow in 1864, and at once began to carry out the ideals of the Trust, and to make the

Clyde a harbour for a world-wide commerce. In the dredging and deepening of the river, in the constant increase of its quay frontage, and in the provision of docks, he made the Clyde accessible to vessels of the largest tonnage, and secured that its waters were deepened for the launching of the ships which were being built. Here again he was troubled by men of less prescience, and of other ideals. At one time the criticism of his daring plans and his direct methods threatened to be successful. But as this man of fine presence, with his strongly marked features, and every evidence in word and deed of a decisive will, explained his policy and outlined his conception of the future, he carried the majority of the directors along with him. He became at last the trusted counsellor, approved in all his oversight of the harbour as an enterprise, and the perfecting of the river as the waterway of the city. No single man has done more to promote the prosperity of the city of Glasgow, to foster its many industries, and to make it a harbour of international repute than George Reith. In 1864, when he was appointed, the revenue of the Trust was £120,000 a year. In 1889, after his twenty-five years of service, it had risen to £330,000. A generous recognition of his services was made on the

occasion of the celebration of his golden wedding in 1884, when he was presented with his portrait. On his retiral he was given an allowance of £1,000 a year.

The inner life of this strong and resourceful man was nourished by an unfaltering faith, expressed in a flawless loyalty to his convictions. That was manifested in a certain rigour of obedience to what he held to be the will of his Master. He was sometimes taunted by the name of the Puritan. Without doubt he did maintain the nobler moral traditions of Puritanism, but he was always more exacting with himself than with others. There was nothing unlovely in the even tenor of his life. He kept the Lord's day with careful abstinences. From public worship, and from the mid-week prayer meeting he was never absent without due cause. He gave steadfast service as an office-bearer of the Church. In his public life he never forgot that he was a citizen of the kingdom of God. His compelling conceptions are disclosed in a letter to his son when he was a student in Edinburgh. Rumours had reached him that George was taking an eager interest in the social life of the city, and sharing in its gaieties as a young man of his personal charm was so freely invited to do. His father wrote :

"There are many religious people in Edinburgh, but they are not, I fear, all pious people. There is a great desire to make the pleasures of the world harmonize with the profession of the Christian faith, in other words, to attempt to bend the Christian life to the pleasures and practices of the world, instead of making these latter bend and give place to the Christian life. Students of divinity must eschew this, and must be on their guard lest they be found endeavouring to do what the Saviour said cannot be done, serving God and mammon. A young man of this type is more likely to be a fashionable young preacher than an earnest, devoted minister of the Gospel. To learn preaching as a trade is a mean enough affair; but to be a minister of Christ, qualified by Him for the work, is the noblest position which a man can occupy on this earth."

Upon the frieze of the large hall of the Aberdeen Grammar School there was inscribed, until a few years ago, the Latin rendering in the Vulgate of the last verse of Psalm cxxvii. That familiar passage reads in our Authorized English Version, "Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with (or subdue) their enemies in the gate." But in the Vulgate there is a striking variation. "Beatus vir qui implevit desiderium suum ex ipsis; non confundetur cum loquetur inimicis suis in porta." This may be translated, "Happy is the man who has his desire fulfilled by them; he shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate." There is no clear textual evidence

for this reading. But it points to a subtler truth than is set forth in the received text. To have many sons and daughters may contribute to a man's power, and may foster his pride. But to see his children obeying his counsels in lives of truth and purity, is to attain a nobler blessing. " How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child ! " It is a sorrow dark with shame to have a son who is a profligate. For a man to see his deepest desires fulfilled by his children is a supreme beatitude. That was the blessing which gladdened the heart of the father of George Reith.

III: THE STUDENT YEARS

THE course and curriculum of a student for the Christian ministry, and the methods of his training, have given rise to age-long discussion in all the communions of the faith. Every generation has its own succession of critics, who are seldom counsellors, and even when they venture to give some positive counsel, only prove that their competence is not equal to their self-confidence. The Roman Catholic Church lays its hand upon a youth and carries him into a training college in his early years. It takes possession of his body and his soul and all his powers, and it works towards the subjection of his mind and will to his service in the priesthood. After the long course of twelve, or even sixteen years, he becomes a docile instrument in the Church's service. The Episcopal Churches go to the other extreme. They ask only a brief—sometimes a strangely brief—course of training, with a meagre syllabus of studies, usually more intent on instruction in the practical discharge of the duties of the office, than in the fundamental truths on which these

are based. The result is that the average curate, even when he has been a student in Oxford or Cambridge, is confessedly ignorant of the great issues of the faith. As a consequence he is poorly equipped as an exegete of the word, or as an apologist for the doctrine. The outstanding masters of the Church of England, to whose scholarship and preaching power and missionary zeal, the whole Christian Church is indebted, are all men not only of especial gifts, but with a training and a discipline apart from that given in the theological colleges.

The ideals and the requirements of the Non-Conformist Churches of England, and of those in sympathetic relationship to them beyond its borders, exhibit marked differences of the conception of a minister's education. In later years a strenuous endeavour has been made, with a great measure of success, to exact a more thorough and adequate discipline. Generous provision has been made by the building and endowment of colleges, their staffing with skilled teachers, and the prescription of a balanced curriculum. But, as is confessed, there is still need for a more broadly based and more wisely co-ordinated course of study. The attainment of scholarship is not an open door to the average student, however wise and careful

may be the instruction regarding the functions the ministry must fulfil. Only a few attain the standard to which all should be asked to reach.

Here the Scottish Churches may claim, without question, to have cherished a high ideal and, in a great measure, to have realized it. The reverence paid to an educated man by the people, and the positions open to him, have made the task of the Church easier than elsewhere. The Universities in the past, and, in spite of the pressure from other professions, to this day, have ordered the course of their studies with a deference to the preparation of a student for the office of the ministry. But the Presbyterian Church, impelled by the demand of the members of the Church, has always outlined a lengthy, distinctive, and fully inclusive course of theological discipline. There is required a complete University curriculum, with the understanding that it should close with a graduate's degree. To that there is added a course of seven or eight terms in Theology. In later years there has been some shortening of the length of time, for it was realized that, in comparison with the much easier access to other professions, a curriculum costing eight years of a young man's life made too high a demand. But, even under, present conditions, the student of Theology

who fulfils righteousness, emerges from his course with a keen appreciation of scholarship, and is often a master of the word and a defender of its doctrine. The whole English-speaking world has set its seal on this attainment, in the choice so often made of Scottish preachers for its pulpits, and of Scottish professors for its College chairs. But beyond this purely scholastic standard, there is the demand of the Christian people that the student for the ministry shall receive a discipline analogous to that of the training of the twelve. He must be one of the " disciples " who has learned the mind of Christ. He must be one of His " friends " who has become an intimate. And he must be ready to be one of the " witnesses " to Him, to the ends of the earth.

The entrants to this ministry pass under a twofold classification. In one class are to be found the young men from devout Christian families, who have been consecrated to their office in their childhood, sometimes in the hour in which they were born. Hannah is still the mother in many a Scottish home. In the other class there are those, usually of somewhat older years, who have begun life by entering some other profession, or by preparing themselves for a business career. But under a decisive

religious experience, or at the awakening to a new moral consciousness, or by the discovery, while in the Christian service of some congregation, of a gift of exposition or of speech, they are led to a self-dedication to the work of the ministry. Elisha is still called from the plough, and Matthew from the receipt of custom beside the seashore. Every revival of religion sends a band of young men, who have received a baptism of the Spirit, into the Theological Colleges.

George Reith belonged to the first of these two classes. From the manner of his entrance, the education he received, and the course he followed and completed, he can be presented as typical, in the best sense, of the regular student of the Scottish Church. From his youth to his manhood he passed on in a steady progress through the three successive stages of the School, the University, the Theological College. As we walk with him, we shall find ourselves made fully acquainted with the purpose and the discipline of them all.

In his early boyhood he attended one of the seminaries in which a secure grounding in elementary subjects was given. But in his later boyhood he became a scholar in the famous Grammar School of Aberdeen. At that time it

had a man of rare gifts, with a superb scholarship, who was also a born teacher, as its Rector. He became widely known in after years as Sir William Geddes, Principal of the University of Aberdeen. While the range of the subjects which were taught was wide, the focus point of the education in the Grammar School was the mastery of the classics. The supremacy of Aberdeen University, as a school of languages, is due to this early concentration on their acquirement. It was held, with much valid evidence, that the mind was trained and its powers developed by the acquisition of a scholarly knowledge of Latin and Greek. The consequent demand for critical distinction and for adequate interpretation compelled the use of all the faculties of the mind. Not only exacting home tasks, but long and straining school exercises, made the Grammar School an intellectual gymnasium, as one of its well-known academies was appropriately named.

In one of his reminiscent addresses George Reith set this truth in vivid illustration as he faced it in his own experience, in a three hours' task of making a "version" as the rendering into Latin of a lengthy English passage was called.

"I was a scholar at the Grammar School—the old building, of course, in Schoolhill, under William Geddes. One

incident is engraved on my memory. The occasion was my first trial 'version.' We were supposed to sit over it for hours. I wearied, and came out somewhat earlier than I should, at least than the Rector thought I should. He laid his hand upon my shoulder, and looking earnestly at me said simply: Your *first* version, Mr. Reith! I disregarded the hint, and my retribution followed, when a few days later, the versions were given back. The Rector, turning one over after the other, mentioning the names attached, and singling out some '*maxi*' (an extreme blunder) in each, in scathing tones that lowered us all considerably in our self-esteem. When my turn came, the two words '*Copiis victoribus*' pronounced my doom. I hear the sound of the words yet, for I felt very small."

The issue of this discipline justified its severity. Although a mere lad he was equipped, so far as scholarly attainments are concerned, beyond many of older years in our present day. His references to his youth tend to a depreciation of his attainments, for the prizes he won, and the place given him at the close of his course at school, prove both his diligence and its result. He has left on record with a due modesty, how he finished his years at school.

"I achieved, with a little margin to spare, a bursary at Marischal College. Such bursaries were officially presented on an occasion which drew the interest of the whole town. At the call of the town's officer from a window, I mounted the Court House stairs, and being ushered into the presence of the very grave and revered members of the Senate, along with the City Fathers, presided over by the Lord Provost, I was asked if I were a 'town's bairn.' On admit-

ting the soft impeachment, I found that I was to fare better than my merits deserved. That is a fate which has probably pursued me till this present hour."

He entered Marischal College and soon gave evidence of an untiring diligence, with a consequent development in knowledge, and, as was marked, a coming mastery of a concise English style. He was shooting up into the tall, lithe, fair-haired, eager-eyed young man who caught every observer's eye. He began, as one of the youngest of the students, in a low place in the class list. But he gradually forged ahead, and became able to keep step with the older men, many of whom had come from those country schools where a teacher, who was a master both in classics and mathematics, had drilled them into skilful examinees. The people of the large area, to the west and north of Aberdeen, still await the publication of the results of the Bursary competition to which he referred. The school which can present the men who head the list exults with a due and deserved pride. The standard is high, and only a native gift for scholarship, with an adequate training, attains a place in the roll of honour.

On the occasion of a meeting of the Edinburgh Aberdeen Association in 1914 he was a guest of honour at its closing social function. Respond-

ing to the toast he gave a brief but vivid account of the staff of the University in his student days.

"As to my professors: there was Dr. Brown, dear old Dorian, we called him, whose godliness surpassed his Greek, who gathered his students like children under his paternal wing. There was Dr. Maclure, courteous and kindly disposed, who never overcame the unpopularity of his election over the head of Melvin—that man of striking power—who had been doing the work of the chair, after Blackie left for Edinburgh. There was James Nicoll, the shyest of mortals, whom a bow from one of his students on the street threw into consternation; but he had the courage of his convictions, and held tenaciously to a theory about the North West of Scotland, rejected by the leading scientists of the day. At the British Association, held in Aberdeen in 1859, Sir Roderick Murchison, in an address on the subject metaphorically patted Nicoll on the back, patronizingly. But years passed, and the tables were turned, and our old Aberdeen professor was proved to be right. Then there was John Cruikshank, a stern old dominie, who treated us like schoolboys (as in fact some of us were little more). His look struck terror into us, but he had a kind and warm heart under a hard shell. But more notable there was Clerk-Maxwell, rare scholar and scientist as the world came to know afterwards, a noble-souled Christian gentleman, with a refined delicacy of character that bound his class to him in the devotion which his remarkably meagre qualities as a teacher could not undo. His presence was a benediction and an inspiration. Then there was William Martin, not the profoundest of philosophers, but deeply interested in the moral and spiritual welfare of his students. And lastly, there was Alexander Bain, the well-known philosopher of the sensational school with his sharp, clear-cut thinking, probing all our conventional theories, and com-

pelling us to revise and overhaul our beliefs, whether we agreed or disagreed."

Such a review, with its kindly and even generous appreciation, indicates the mind of a young man awakened to the meaning of scholarship, and able to understand the influence of personalities. As a student he rose year by year in repute, and in 1861 he graduated at King's College with honours. But he had attracted attention not only for his intellectual aptitudes, but for qualities of even higher value. The University authorities made him the offer of a Cadetship in the Indian army—one of the most coveted openings to young men of spirit. The letter conveying the offer indicates the reason for it.

"SIR,—

"Col. Sykes has placed at our disposal a Cadetship in the Indian Army, to be bestowed on any young student who was highly distinguished in the Arts classes. He must be above 18 and under 22 years of age, and he must take up the appointment by the end of November next. I am authorized to put it in your power to accept or decline this appointment, and I shall feel obliged if you will intimate your decision."

But this tempting offer came to one whose decision to enter another, and very different service had already been made. The prospect of a career in the army, so alluring to some young men with Reith's charm and gifts, did not engage his mind. By " the end of November next " he intended to be living his life under very different conditions.

It was then under the dynamic of a consecration to the ministry of the Gospel that in 1861, now 19 years of age, he became a student in the Edinburgh College of the Free Church of Scotland. This school of Theology is commonly known by the name of The New College, from the fact that, when it was founded at the Disruption of the Church of Scotland in 1843, it was intended that an education both in Arts and Theology should be given within its walls. It was to be the New, as against the Old, College of the city. The abolition of theological tests for the chairs in the Edinburgh University rendered that department of study no longer necessary or desirable. Indeed, its teachers were appointed to corresponding chairs in the civic University. Reith's father was inclined, as one loyal to his own city, to send his son to the Aberdeen College of the Church. But it was not fully equipped, and he recognized the

value of the larger number of fellow-students and the quickening associations of the Scottish capital. A friendship with the Bonar family, and with that of the Burns, both so highly esteemed, ensured the entry into an atmosphere of faith and service much to be desired.

It cannot be said that the New College of this period offered any inducement to students for the ministry, either through the repute of its teachers, or their methods of instruction. The members of the staff had been appointed, rather because of the esteem in which they were held, or because of their social and ecclesiastical connections, and their personal influence with the leaders of the Church, than for any academic distinction. No one of them had any definite scholarly fitness for the work of the chair. Some of them were not efficient in any sense of the word. It is on record that, in one class, students who answered the roll-call used to slip out, and were never missed. George Reith declared that he " got through a valuable course of reading during my class attendance " in another case. Had such appointments continued to be made, the name of the Church would never have been mentioned in the same breath as scholarship. During the years 1843 to 1861 the pulse of the Church was still beating

strongly with its Protest against the intrusion of ministers into parishes by lay patrons, and men were honoured and were notable rather for their moral and spiritual passion, than for their competence as teachers of divinity. The evidence for this state of matters has been set down with engaging frankness by Professor Strahan of Londonderry, and afterwards of Belfast, in his biography of Professor A. B. Davidson.[1] Dr. Strahan was one of its outstanding students, who entered the College after this period had passed when a new spirit was inspiring both teachers and taught. He writes under a full recognition of the moral earnestness of the inefficient teachers. With such professors as Smeaton, Buchanan, Bannerman, and Duncan the students were in general religious sympathy, even with a sincere personal respect. But there was a leaven working in their minds, due to the awakened inquiry into the bases of the faith, and an absorbing interest in the problems raised by an enlarging scientific knowledge, and an assailing sense of the mystery of the spiritual life. There was a bold demand for freedom in criticism and interpretation, and an acquirement of a more adequate and defensible re-statement

[1] *Andrew Bruce Davidson, D.D., LL.D., D.Litt.*, by James Strahan, D.D.

of the Christian doctrine. The claim was made of the right to question a dogma, and yet not to be open to the charge of scepticism or unbelief. Even of "the unique and wonderful Rabbi Duncan, the only professor who was highly interesting to young Davidson," the record reads:

"The Rabbi did more for him than for any other student, but not as a teacher of Hebrew. For though he could 'talk his way to the wall of China,' he was unfit to be an instructor in Hebrew or any other language, not even by his lectures on Old Testament theology, into which there entered scarcely a ray of historical or literary criticism. It was rather by that spiritual genius which makes the *Colloquia Peripatetica* a living book to this day." (p. 62.)

This period of obscurantism was closed by the advent of a new era of Biblical Criticism, and a new attitude to historical inquiry. The scholars of the Continent, and especially of the German universities, had become most accurate grammarians, and fearless critics of the articles of the Christian faith. The sound of their trumpets was heard in the English and Scottish Theological schools. Their writings were eagerly read, and their conclusions made the old positions untenable. But the more direct influence was the appointment of teachers who were at least well acquainted with their writings. The first evidence of the change was seen in the

appointment of A. B. Davidson to be the Hebrew tutor of the College. The second proof was the election of Robert Rainy, the young minister at Huntly, to the chair of Church History in 1862. There abides the record of the coming into their midst of this young man, with his aspect of calm brightness, his clear and measured and always silencing speech, and his reasoned expositions, with a balanced statement of the conclusions which secured their acceptance. When Davidson was promoted to the professorship in 1863, a new life began to throb in the minds of the students, and a new atmosphere of liberty and of energy had begun.

The representative students of that time might have been divided into two classes—the disciples of the Hebraist, Davidson, and those of the Historian, Rainy. While all recognized the surpassing power of Davidson, there was a more questioned opinion in regard to Rainy. He was not a born teacher, it was admitted, and never attained to Davidson's hold on the mind of his students. But to George Reith he was the teacher above all others. He upheld Rainy against all debate. His devotion was recognized by his teacher, and Reith often spoke, in after years, of the private conferences of counsel and even of prayer, into which Rainy admitted this

young spirit who held him in reverence. It may be said, without question, that the most penetrating and most adequate tribute ever paid to Rainy was this from his pen.

"It is not easy for me to give my impressions of the influence exerted by Dr. Rainy in his class forty-five years ago, for the simple reason that that influence amounted to a mental revolution in my life. If we students, at that time, had any pre-judgment in coming to his class, it must have been somewhat against him. Of manner and delivery he had absolutely none, and never pretended or attempted to have any. There was a good deal of what appeared to be indifference, or even nonchalance about it. His style was involved and cumbersome. The 'popular' certainly was conspicuous by its absence. In spite of all this Rainy gripped us. It was the power of intellect that showed a masterly comprehension of the truth, or principle, under discussion. It was the power of a historic consciousness by which the past was made to clothe its dead with life, and the questions and controversies which agitated bygone centuries became luminous as we were made to recognize the same principles at stake, the same motives at work, and the same tendencies in operation in the present day. It was his power also of the imaginative sympathy by which he could present both sides of an argument with equal impartiality. But these things alone cannot explain Rainy's peculiar influence over his class. His opening prayer was a spiritual exercise. It revealed a man who had gone deep into the things of God. And in lectures we were constantly shown how, amid all the shortsightedness and the follies and weaknesses of the Church, the living Lord had never left us; how, amid discordant parties battling each for its creed, the Holy Spirit was still fulfilling His function of guiding God's people into the truth;

how controversy itself was used by God for the elucidation of His mind and will ; so that at times, as we listened—and the silence was phenomenal,—and the voice of our professor assumed those lower, pathetic tones that betrayed his deeper emotion, the walls of the class-room fell apart, and we saw ' one like to the Son of Man walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks which are the seven Churches, and the only words of appropriate comment were, ' We have seen Thy goings, O God, even the goings of my God, my King, in Thy sanctuary.' " [1]

This warm appreciation not only does honour both to master and disciple. It reveals what George Reith became during his student years in the New College. It discovers the secret of his loyalties to the faith and to that conception of the Church which held his allegiance through all his life. The devotion to this master of all his discipline never faltered. Only in one regard did he hesitate in his acceptance of Rainy's leadership. That was in the unyielding demand for the complete disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. Shortly after Rainy had delivered a speech, proclaiming an uncompromising attitude, he paid a visit to Glasgow, and Reith asked a few friends to meet him. In the course of the evening the conversation settled upon the topic of the day. One of the company spoke of the impression made upon

[1] *The Life of Principal Rainy*, by P. Carnegie Simpson, D.D., p. 208.

him by reading *The Parish of Taxwood*,[1] a record of the period of the Ten Years' Conflict by the Rev. Dr. J. R. Macduff, the evangelical minister of Sandyford Parish, Glasgow. He added his opinion that a wiser and more patient dealing with the situation, as described in that record, might have rendered unnecessary the brave, and yet most costly, Protest. Rainy moved uneasily in his seat, and then spoke out in a quiet, yet intensely felt sentence, "No! They were dead days those." In a deference, both of word and tone, Reith made reply, "Was it not the springtime in the land, which might have led on to a summer of sunshine, and an autumn with a glad harvest?"

[1] *The Parish of Taxwood and Some of its Older Memories*, by the Rev. John R. Macduff, D.D.

IV: IN THE GATEWAY

EVERYONE who has passed through the long curriculum of a student for the Scottish ministry is aware of the transforming change of which he is conscious as he approaches its close. This change is sometimes even more evident to a watchful observer than to himself. At his entrance he was troubled by a reaction against the new conditions, an impatience with the more personal regimen, and, at times, a revulsion from the ideals and the motives impressed upon him. Some have been tempted to go back, and to walk no more in such an exacting path. But as the years have passed and as he has begun to find himself interested in the doctrine, engrossed with the history, and motived by the ethical dynamic of the Christian faith, and as he faces the issues raised, both in the life of society and in the experience of his own soul, he awakes to the change within. It is not that his mind, like the dyer's hand, is stained by the colours into which it has been steeped. The change is deeper. It is a new spirit, with new interests, new desires, new

emotions, and often to his own surprise, new aptitudes. Most men, in the closing year of their course, enter an inner shrine.

The forces which have produced and sealed this transforming change are at least four in number. The first, most naturally, is that of the teachers who have held his mind and gained the mastery of his affections. A young man who leaves a College, sadly conscious that none of his teachers has enlarged his knowledge, or changed his moral temper by giving him an impelling ideal, begins his lifework in a sad poverty. The many tributes paid by students to revered teachers, of which that given by George Reith to Rainy is a supreme example, bear witness to this primary influence. But the second force is that of his fellow-students, and, most naturally, of those who have become his intimates. The student who has become one of a band of men, whose hearts God has touched, can never pass out of the power of that association, although he should go as far astray as Saul. More often, however far apart they may dwell, he keeps in unison with them through all the years. The third force is the less direct, but sometimes more penetrating influence of his surroundings, of the city and its life (and most of the great Universities have been in-

tellectual encampments in the midst of popular centres of commerce and industry), whose interests he is compelled to share. Or, even more educative, it is the enlightening and transforming effect of travel into other lands. The fourth force may be called that of the horizon. It is the work upon which he is soon to enter, the life-task he is about to undertake, the function he is about to fulfil, and, in the case of a student for the ministry, the service he is about to undertake for a Master. That horizon is described more and more clearly as he passes on. All these forces exert their power on the student as he is facing the gateway of his ministry, and they are a great part of his equipment for it. Let us note them in the case of George Reith.

We have already seen how potent was the influence of his teachers, and especially of Rainy. But he was equally felicitous in the intimates of his College life. He never ceased to speak with generous gratitude of his College friends, to mention their names with tender feeling, and to seek their fellowship through all the years of his life. Among them there was George Webster Thomson, the minister of the West Church, Aberdeen, who was his groomsman at his wedding; Simeon MacPhail, who fulfilled

his years of eager evangelism in Elgin ; George D. Low, who proved his zeal for the gospel in Fountainbridge ; and Alexander Whyte, the noble Puritan, with his apostolic ministry in St. George's, Edinburgh. There were two others he would have desired to be mentioned. Taylor Innes who became an advocate in Edinburgh ; and, as deeply honoured as any, a student some years before his time, Marcus Dods, who was awaiting, through a strangely protracted period, a call to a charge, but meanwhile was enriching his own ample scholarship, and giving an earnest of his rare grace in leading young minds walking in the shadow, into his own clear light and calm faith. Marcus Dods kept an always open door for this band of intimates.

It is to be regretted that, in the lapse of time, the many letters, of which mention is so often made, which passed between this fellowship, have not been preserved. Apart from their personal witness to the College and its life, there was the revelation of the inner mind of these ardent believers, as they looked toward the office it was their deepest passion to fulfil. There are, however, letters from Alexander Whyte, which lead us into their relationship to each other. One of these is especially characteristic.

"4, Melbourne Street, Edinburgh.
"*Saturday.*

"My Dear Reith,—

"Many thanks for your urgently kind invitation to Glasgow. Many things second the idea, but one thing decidedly forbids it now. Considering my views about the Wynds, and considering what both Howie and Wells said about coming through, seeing the work and putting my hand for a half-day to it, I am clearly persuaded that it would be leading myself into renewed discomfort, and would probably mislead them, for I do not feel I ought to come at all.

"I suppose you are reading hard. Lucky dog! Unlucky dog I! Alone at the top seat of Smeaton's gallery, Gray absent—nobody indeed present. MacPhail, Low, not to say Reith, away, and I alone! What would last session have been to you, MacPhail, Low, and shall I, in my self-complacency and self-importance, add Whyte, being absent? Well, it's passing! May it pass into something higher, happier, holier, as *it shall* by the grace of God. Ask Marcus Dods, the Younger, if the article on The Incarnation in the January number of the Christian Instructor 1830, is by Marcus Dods, the Elder, as Grosart calls them.

"I must send this as it is for the hour approaches when I must leave for the country to preach to-morrow to a nice little flock what I hope will be an incisive word on 'They shall return, but not to the Most High.' Now accept Whyte's best love and his prayer for grace and prosperity here and its fruition hereafter. A happy Christmas in the original significance of the felicitation."

This intimate intercourse was kept up to the end, busy as both men were in their straining charges. On occasion, Whyte becomes touched to what some would think an unusual sprightliness of humour, as in one letter he gives a forecast of the competitors for the Cunningham Scholarship, in the list which includes some of the professors, but he does not give them a high place in the result. On another occasion he genially reproached Reith for not having asked himself to be his groomsman at his wedding but had preferred the man of more impressive appearance in George Webster Thomson. The last public expression of this high regard was given at the celebration of Dr. Reith's Jubilee where he reminded the large gathering that he was the only one left of the little company of New College Students of that time. After giving

some delightful reminiscences, he said that it was Dr. Reith's inborn and inbred distinction and elevation of character that had endeared him to them all. He was a kind of ideal set up before others, a quieting, elevating, ennobling and sanctifying influence. It was young Reith who discovered Principal Rainy and opened the eyes of his fellow-students to his teacher's character, ability and services. He had even given to Dr. Rainy his first feeling of assurance in his work at a time when many were doubtful of his competence for his work. Still more he had won the deep affection of his intimates—in the years of the outlook towards the gateway of their ministry.

The third influence is one which too few enjoy. It corrects one of the limitations of the Scottish mind. It may be ventured that every Christian communion has some one narrowing and limiting feature. The Church of Rome is in bondage to its inherited Paganism. It is an imperial corporation carrying on many of the traditions and customs of the Pagan cults of the Roman Empire. It is Pagan in its government under a Pontifex Maximus, in its sacraments, corrupted by the Pagan mysteries, in its priesthood, whose garments in their proud details present the priest in the temple, not the

apostle in the Upper Room. Bunyan, true to his own insight and vision set the truth when he placed Pope and Pagan beside each other on the pilgrim way.

The Church of England, so articulately liberal in its Articles, and so forbearing in its discipline, is narrowed by its insularity. It is only the Church of *England*, wherever it may carry the Gospel, or build its shrines of worship, or set its bishops in authority. It fails to be *catholic* in the noblest sense of the word, as so many of its members keenly realize. Its Churches, wherever they may be built, are, to use a noble and significant phrase, in a perfectly accurate sense, "forever England." Not only its ministry and its message, but its appeal to humanity, are limited by this insularity. John Wesley displayed his escape from this isolating feature, when, after his return from Georgia, where he passed through a liberating experience, he declared "The world is my parish." He founded the Methodist Church, the most universal of all the Christian communities of English-speaking men, so much larger and so much more widely influential than that Church which barred its doors against him and his preachers. Wesley set the truth in an emphatic declaration :

"Many reasons I have to bless God for my having been carried to America, contrary to all my preceding resolutions. Hereby I have been taught to beware of men. Hereby, God hath given me to know many of His servants, particularly those of the Church of Herrnhuth. Hereby, my passage is open to the writings of holy men in other tongues."

That is the thanksgivings of a great spirit delivered from his insularity.

The Scottish Church suffers from its own limitation. That is not the form of its Church government. Presbytery is not peculiarly or distinctly Scottish. It is the form adopted in many lands, and it is disclosed in the only entirely catholic religious book in the world—the New Testament. The peculiar temptation of the Scottish Church is provincialism, which sometimes becomes parochialism. Its time-honoured leaders and its larger minds have always risen above this narrow limitation. As they have kept in touch with the scholarship of all the centuries—and no Church is more open-minded in this regard—and as its confessors have served themselves heirs to all the saints and mystics of the past, and cherished the diarists and hymn-writers of all races and ages, they have looked out beyond their narrow geographical boundaries. As enlarging have been the far-flung and generously supported

Foreign Mission enterprises which have lifted the eyes of its simplest folk to look abroad on all humanity. But too often not only the unlessoned people of the villages, but some of its self-important leaders have been absurdly provincial. The pitiful debates over attitudes in prayer, over the use of the inspiring songs of the Christian faith written in the various tongues of believing people, and over the place to be given to music in the sanctuary, are due to this provincialism. It is the same spirit which led to some of those sundering divisions which have been so fatal to the peace, and so weakening to the force of the Church in fulfilling its mission in Scotland. That narrowness of outlook is still troubling some sincere and devout minds. It must not be forgotten that some of these divisions—not all—were dictated by a passion for Christ's headship over His Church, and for a more worthy ministry of the word. These have all been justified. But the petty questions which aroused embittering debates and issued in needless separations were raised by the provincial mind.

There are two remedies for all provincialism. One is a wider reading and a surer knowledge, with a clearer understanding of the vital, as well as the merely desired, in the Church's creed

and government. That is happily recognized to-day in the shorter services and the more genially adapted worship of the place of prayer. It is still more manifest in the loyalty to the larger issues, at least on the part of the great body of the Christian people. But the more effectual method of escape is by travel. Only the untravelled mind remains provincial. The Scot who travels, and becomes a citizen of the world, returns to wonder at the dissensions and disputes, as well as to express his regret at the petty ambitions and little vanities of so many of the preachers of the Church. This truth has been set by Principal Caird with convincing conciseness. "The pettiness of mind incident to life in a small circle is best corrected by foreign travel. The remedy for intellectual narrowness is to be free of the wide world of thought. Converse with many cities and men disabuses the mind of the parochial standard of judgment. The man of scholarly tastes is, at least, not likely to settle into the vulgar zealot, absorbing his soul in the petty politics of a sect." [1]

We must not confuse, however, significance with size, or intellectual greatness with material magnitude, or spiritual issues with temporal felicities. Sparta can teach the world the

[1] *University Addresses*, p. 381.

nobility of service in a narrow environment. Athens can remind us of the noble issues which may be brought to their fullness of power within a small arena. But the contentions of the provincial mind arise over trivial customs and are manifested in the craving for some petty office and the chagrin, when it is denied—so often resulting in the sour look, and the rude word. The self-importance of men in securing a place in the conduct of some committee, and their fussy busy-ness in carrying out some little detail—so often to the neglect of the solemn vocation of the evangelist, and the costly function of the shepherd of souls—display the provincial mind. That makes men content to be scheming ecclesiastics. It is against that narrowing ideal that Chalmers broke out in his protest, " Who cares for the Free Church, who cares for any Church, compared with the Christian good of Scotland ? "

There was nothing provincial in the make and frame of George Reith. His complete freedom from it was manifested in an instinctive distaste for its methods. That explains his attitude to officialism so surprising to many of his friends. It was in his travels that he received a liberalizing education. He confessed, on one occasion, that it was his fear of the provincialism

which marked so many minds in Edinburgh, that made him so eager to see the world. He often quoted Paul's rapturous cry, "I would see Rome," as the aspiration of a liberated soul. His tour through the chief cities of a large area of the United States, in his seventeenth year, when he accompanied his father, had quickened his imagination. In his New College studies he became aware of the power of the pre-eminent scholarship and unshackled mind of Germany. He planned a session at a German University. His father, fearful of "the loose-minded doctrine" and still more anxiously of "the easy-going customs" of a German city made some protest. The correspondence shows a tender solicitude on both sides, and it ended in consent. Along with Robert Lorimer, a student of the Glasgow Free Church College, he spent five months at Erlangen, in Bavaria, where Delitzsch was making the Old Testament a living and a human book, and Hoffman was outlining the historic movements of the early Church. He took occasion to visit Nürnberg, Munich, and Strasburg, delighting in their art and music, and acquainting himself with the great moralities of a city life. He returned, by way of Paris and Dieppe, with a notable development of his cultured mind.

It may be that in some cases a six months' travel, with a share in the life of a continental city, has broadened the mind but shrivelled the faith of a student. That could not have been said of George Reith. In a letter written by his fellow-student, Robert Lorimer, some time afterwards, a most reticent tribute is given.

"Our stay in Erlangen will always be memorable to me, because of its having brought me under one of the most sanctifying forces of my life, in making him known to me, whom I love with all the strength of a man. It had been arranged before we had seen each other that we should lodge together in Erlangen during the summer months of 1864. I was there a whole week by myself before he arrived. I soon found out what manner of man he was: very earnest, vehement indeed, in the spiritual life, as that is prescribed for us by the eternal verities of forgiveness through the blood of Christ, of reconciliation to God and peace with Him; and a fellowship with Him by the power of the Holy Spirit. There were circumstances which made that life particularly influential at that moment to his companion. There had been months of inward disorder and hopelessness, in which the reading of the Bible and secret prayer had been

wholly abandoned. Long solitary walks in the sandy pine-woods near Erlangen, during the lonely week which preceded his arrival, had brought the dawn of better things. But now, and without any confessions made, he ministered by word and deed most effectually. But there was no melancholy through our thinking and feeling and speaking about serious things, for he would often break out into innocent mirth, and even fits of laughter, although he seemed always to feel that God's eye was on him."

He returned from Germany much changed in his intellectual outlook, ripened to a new generosity in judgment, and still more evidently broadened in his sympathy with all sorts and conditions of men. The love of travel held him more firmly than before. He often expressed, with a very evident regret, that it was beyond his power to see the great cities and historic vicinities of Italy—a desire he afterwards realized. Still more eagerly he craved to walk through the Holy Land in the footsteps of Jesus. But he was able to make a visit to Greece, in the company of a friend of the family, Dr. Alexander Roberts,[1] who was now the minister of St. John's Wood Presbyterian

[1] Afterwards, and for many years, Professor of Humanity in the University of St. Andrews.

Church in London. But the horizon to which he had so long looked out was now becoming near at hand, and was holding his mind. He found himself eager to preach, and to such a man the opportunities and even appeals were many. There are records of his taking services in Edinburgh, and in Dundee, where indeed a lengthened term of preaching was offered to him, by Dr. W. Wilson of St. Paul's Church. Glasgow and the West were also eager to hear this young man of promise, and there is a detailed report of his preaching in the High Church of Kilmarnock, before a critical congregation, with most emphatic commendation. The impression he made even by his appearance—a tall and upright figure, a face of a clear complexion, framed by fair and abundant hair, a glancing eye, a singularly clear voice—were only the outward and sympathetic *media* of his sentences of tender grace and intense moral passion. But he set himself to the immediate task of his life, so as to complete his course. Its close was signalized by his gaining the highest honour open to the students of the New College, the Cunningham Scholarship, as his friend Whyte had hinted, in the letter of loyal comradeship, before the results of the Examination were known.

The succeeding months were spent in due preparation for licence. That preparation was more severe, and it included a much larger range of studies, than to-day. In this less rigorous time the Presbyteries, as a rule, accept the evidence given by the College authorities, as to the student's scholarship, and they rely upon their acquaintance, often through a special committee, or of their own personal knowledge, with his mode of life. But in Reith's student days, almost the whole round of a student's study were brought under review. His knowledge of the Hebrew Old Testament scriptures, and his understanding of the New Testament Gospels and Epistles, the range of his reading in Church history, and his power to defend the faith against all questioners, were the subjects of strict inquiry. But more urgent were the tests applied to his knowledge of the doctrines of the faith. His skill as a preacher was tested, not by the acceptance of some sermon he had already preached, but by his dealing with a prescribed passage of scripture in one sermon and a text in another, and both of these were adroitly selected to test his attitude toward the fundamentals of the faith. Such rigour has passed away, wisely enough. But there are some still living who remember the hours of

this ordeal, and the cost of preparation for it. Reith faced it with an eager heart, and, as a result, he was licensed with some acclaim by the Presbytery of Glasgow, where his father was now resident, on 12th February 1866. He once spoke of that hour, and of the awe it cast upon his spirit, for it was the hour in which he took his final step through the gateway to the ministry.

There followed a few weeks of unforgettable fellowship before he began the work of his life. Along with Marcus Dods, now minister of Renfield Church, Glasgow, and Taylor Innes, who had entered the profession of law, he spent a time of retreat at the English Lakes. With such companions, amidst such scenes of appealing loveliness, in times, now of common prayer and now of silence, he reviewed his past and looked out with quickened desire into his future. He came back to Glasgow to live in his father's house, and in its always inspiring fellowship, baptized anew by the Spirit, with the dominating purpose of preaching the Gospel.

Behind the fulfilment of this purpose there was a determining incident. It is a frequent experience that not only the influence of some revered personality, but the testimony from some record of a chivalrous loyalty to Christ

has made a deep mark on a young mind at an impressionable age. In a private notebook he wrote the brief story of his unforgettable experience. "My parents had dedicated me to the ministry at the Disruption, and I was never allowed to forget it. When I had finished with the University, and several tempting offers were made to me, I hesitated for a little, much to my father's alarm. One day I found on my table the Life of David Sandeman [1]—laid there on purpose by him. That rebuked, and settled me, and without delay I began to study for the ministry. Thank God for His goodness in permitting me to serve Him in that ministry for so many years." The vow, taken under its influence, was fulfilled, when he stood in the College Church on 4th November 1866, on the day of his ordination, to receive the apostolic sanction of the Church of his baptism and training.

[1] *Memoir of the Life and Brief Ministry of the Rev. David Sandeman, Missionary to China*, by the Rev. Andrew A. Bonar.

V: THE YOUNG EVANGELIST

IT was a fateful circumstance that George Reith began his ministry in Glasgow and in the Wynd Church with the inspiration of its amazing history. The story of this spring of evangelistic fervour is one of the most engrossing in the annals of the Gospel in Scotland.[1] It begins in 1690, as few even of those who cherish the name are aware, in a movement which found its sphere of influence among the poor, and its place of blessing in a humble building, set up on a vacant space beside one of the Wynds, or narrow lanes, running off the Trongate, not far from the Glasgow Cross. That little gathering of most simple folk seems to have given to the very soil a consecration it long retained. Their earnest prayers seemed to have left an *aura* within the walls. The evangelic message and the untiring zeal of these eager Gospellers, in a dark age, attracted the common folk of the town, until there was no room for them within

[1] Cf. *The United Free Church Record*, for 1927, pp. 157 and 327—for a graphic account by the Rev. John Riddell, B.A., senior minister of the Wynd Church, Glasgow. Cf. also *The Wynd Journal* for 1859–60.

the narrow walls. For their accommodation the Presbytery built the large and handsome Church of St. Andrew's in its broad Square, and the first exodus from the Wynd Church found shelter there. But churches may be too stately for some worshippers, and too broad-aisled for their modes of service. A little band refused to leave the house of their spiritual birth and baptism. They were not willing to become a parish Church, and so to lose the right of choosing their own minister, as was required under the Act of Patronage. They remained to carry on their mission. Again, as the pews filled, a second migration was inevitable. Some found a home in the plain, four-square, hip-roofed and deeply galleried "Chapel of Ease" which they built in North Albion Street. Others left the Established Church, and formed, in 1754, the Relief congregation (i.e. relief from secular patronage) in Dovehill, which was the first Relief congregation in Glasgow. Still the psalms continued to be sung within the old place of prayer as some clung tenaciously to the spot of their most sacred associations. But the now rapid growth of the city, and the building of Churches in the new districts, lessened the need and the opportunity of the missioners in the Wynd. In 1810, after one hundred and twenty years of a stirring

religious life, the old Church was taken down, and the site became " The Kail-Market " with its open-air stalls for the sale of garden produce.

In 1854 the winds of God had again begun to breathe, and there came that Revival of Religion which visited a large area of the English-speaking world on both sides of the Atlantic. It reached the full strength of its spiritual power in 1857–9. The Free Church Presbytery of Glasgow, under the leadership of Dr. Robert Buchanan, had begun a new Home Mission movement. The old site of the Wynd Church with its cherished memories was bought, and a plain, but comely, house of worship was built. Again the tide rose in flood. The new movement was fostered by the leadership of a succession of singularly able and devoted men. The first minister, Dugald MacColl, gathered his flock, and led them out to a larger fold in the Bridgegate. Robert Howie followed, and built in 1860 the spacious building in Charlotte Street, naming it Trinity, to carry on his strenuous evangelism. James Wells entered the succession in 1864, and again the crowded Church was left behind for a larger and well-equipped place of prayer, called the Barony, which still looks out on Cathedral Square. Then John Riddell, who had proved his power as a winner of souls in Dundee, followed

in due course. The same migration of men and women, redeemed from lives of debasement and shame, passed with him to another large and well-equipped Church named Augustine, built by leading Glasgow citizens. That is not the end of the story. From these transplanted congregations other offshoots sprang, until there are now sixteen Churches, which can trace back their lineage to the little mission flock of the Wynd. John Riddell, who is now senior minister of the present Wynd Church, can tell the story of the striking conversions of hopeless profligates and sensually hardened prodigals, completing his record of their new lives of fervour with a shining face and a grateful ascription of praise.

It was to that sphere of service that George Reith passed, in the early months of 1866, to become assistant to James Wells. Some wondered at this Cunningham Scholar, a master of languages, endued with a power of forthright speech, entering upon such a service. Those who knew his spiritual experience understood. And when he preached his fervent gospel, taking at one time a whole month of service, while his "bishop" was on the Continent, or, as he was heard in the open-air addressing the heedless and the vagabond in Jail Square, or in wet weather under the scanty shelter of some bridge,

they realized why he had craved to reap in this harvest field. He was by gift, by temperament, and by devotion, an Evangelist.

For about six months he was the evangelist of the Wynds. But his name was being noised abroad. Various spheres of ministry were suggested. Several doors were opened. But one congregation began to look towards him with a definite purpose as their minister. Dr. Buchanan of the College Church, the leader and inspirer of the Wynd Mission movement, had formed a high opinion of the young evangelist, and confessed to a certain estimate of his future. He was now a man of sixty years of age, and he was bearing a heavy burden in the oversight of the Free Church, placed upon him because of his gift and grace as an ecclesiastical leader. He was the minister of the leading congregation of the Free Church in the city. St. John's, where Alexander Whyte had begun his searching ministry; Renfield, where Marcus Dods was engaging the regard of a congregation with a high intellectual demand; St. Matthew's, where Samuel Miller, a devout Puritan in every sense of the word, kept the loyalty of an influential congregation—these were all centres of social influence. But still more influential in its personnel and in its social status, was the College Church,

which had gathered into its worship and work the leading citizens of the West End of Glasgow.

This College Church had also a history of even more interest than that of the Wynd congregation. As in the case of the Wynd, it is a two-volumed record. It traces its succession back to Pre-Reformation days. Its ancestral building was erected in the Trongate, not far from the site of the Wynd, in the year 1293. Its designation was "The Collegiate Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and St. Anne Our Lady College." In 1529 a new Church was built on the site, and endowed by the Corporation of Glasgow to carry on the appointed rites. The Reformers of 1560 had no use for such foundations, or such a ritual. The building fell into disrepair. But in 1592 it was set in order, and adapted to the simpler worship of a Reformed Faith. It was now popularly known as "The Laigh Kirk," in distinction from the Cathedral, which was the High Kirk, and the only other Church in Glasgow. But the old name of St. Mary's was retained for this new building. The name "Tron" (Scottice, a weighing machine) was a popular appellation given to it, because the public Steelyard was placed in front of the St. Mary's Steeple. The steeple still stands, but after a fire which destroyed the Church

a new edifice was built, some yards farther back, and no longer connected with the steeple. This Church of St. Mary had a notable succession of ministers. Among these Robert Baillie, of Westminster Assembly fame, Woodrow, from whom President Woodrow Wilson proudly claimed descent, Stevenson MacGill, a scholar of high repute, and in 1815, Thomas Chalmers, whose audiences crammed the Church almost to suffocation, are notable names on the list. In due succession, in 1833, Robert Buchanan was translated to the charge from the Parish of Saltoun.

In 1843 at the Disruption Dr. Buchanan brought his congregation out with him, almost intact. The Tron Free Church was built in Dundas Street, and, for fourteen years, its congregation held a leading place in Glasgow. But, as a considerable number of its members had removed to the West End, they desired to seek a more convenient site. At the same time, chiefly through the munificent gift of Dr. William Clark of Wester Moffat, the finely planned Theological College of the Church was built in Lynedoch Street. He had secured a site large enough to build a Church as a part of the College buildings. This he offered as a gift to the members of the Tron Church, who were thinking of moving westward. In 1857

the handsome block of buildings, in the Italian style of architecture, with a massive campanile, which is one of the outstanding landmarks of the city, was completed. The migrating congregation was named The College Church, so that this association of Church and College was an apt repetition of the Pre-Reformation days.

It was this premier Glasgow congregation, with its large membership and its men and women of recognized social standing, which set their minds on young George Reith, then only twenty-four years of age. Most naturally, both through a native modesty and a clear consciousness of the burden and the responsibility, he hesitated to make a response to their proposal. There was no doubt that in many regards he was unusually well equipped for such a charge. Its evangelical people craved to see such a man leading their young men and women into the faith. Dr. Buchanan was as insistent as any of the others. He was feeling not only the lessened energy of his years, but the strain of his ecclesiastical leadership. His letters are emphatic in their consent. But Reith never deceived himself as to the issue of any decision. He realized the contrast between the stately, self-possessed, urbane and unimpassioned Buchanan and himself—tense-minded, sensitive, responsive. He

was well aware of the diversity of the manner and the matter of their message as preachers. It was a popular saying in Glasgow that "If it were a sin to draw a tear, Buchanan would never be found guilty of it." He knew that this honoured minister had gathered round him a body of people to whom his presence was a benediction, and his patronage an accepted favour. Reith's heart was with the folk of the Wynd. In his hesitation he wrote his master spirit Rainy. The reply is characteristic and significant.

"COVE,

"19*th Sept.* 1866.

"MY DEAR MR. REITH,—

"I am very sorry now that I discouraged your coming yesterday, since you think it would have been a relief to your mind to talk the matter over. My own feeling about the matter is indicated very much by the fact that when, early in summer Professor Douglas spoke to me of the possibility of your being called to the College Church, I felt no disposition to dissuade him. I am very well aware how much must present itself to your mind on the other side; and I am far from denying that the adverse considerations are of a kind and weight such as may very fairly induce a man to hesitate, and

such as would sufficiently sustain your course against any adverse criticism if you declined. But whether you ought to decline is, after all, another question. No one can answer it but yourself. And I repeat that as far as my mind on the matter is concerned, the fact I have already referred to indicates the result to which any discussion of the matter would probably bring you. My impressions of the whole case lead me to think that you would be in the line of duty in accepting the call. That is so much my mind, that I have always looked forward to that as the course to which you would be led in the end. But I most willingly acknowledge that I may be in the wrong. I shall think much of you to-day and to-morrow.

"With all regard,

"Yours sincerely,

"ROBERT RAINY."

It is difficult to avoid the reflection that this is the letter of one who does not wish to commit himself to a counsel which might be resented in quarters he does not desire to offend. It reads as though its writer were letting "I dare not, wait upon I would." But we must also willingly acknowledge that we may be in the wrong. Yet there seems to be no doubt that, in after

MISS ADAH MARY WESTON.

MRS. GEORGE REITH.

years, many were assured that in allowing Rainy's tepid counsel to guide him, Reith made a mistake. His hesitation was well grounded, and, it may be frankly said, was fully justified. To begin with, a colleagueship in the ministry of a Scottish Church is always a perilous adventure, under the best conditions. At least there should not be any resident colleagues. There cannot be two bishops in one diocese. It may be true that, when the junior colleague becomes related to the senior by some family bond, or some social connection, the double harness is worn without the chafing of the spirit. But the older man is usually either jealous of the younger man's popularity, or he is tempted to control the younger man's action, and to patronize his ministry. It would be a wonder if he did not feel the lessened devotion to his preaching, and the widening distance between himself and the young. He is also somewhat tried by the attitude of the new members who have been drawn to the congregation by the younger man. This reaction has been emphasized in the discerning jest, reported regarding one outspoken man of dramatic gift, who declared that " he bit the blanket every night " in his sleepless chagrin at the popularity of his young colleague, from whose evening ser-

vices large numbers were turned away for lack of room. On the other side the young man is often eager, impulsive, self-willed, even impatient —that foolish petulance of the young, high-strung and self-assured person—and, at times, is inconsiderate both in speech and act. Both men are also tempted by the formation of partisan coteries in the congregation, and by comparative criticisms, which are always reported, and sometimes more sharply edged, than when first uttered.

Few of these discordances took place in the colleagueship of the College Church. Both were men of courteous gentlehood. Both were of one mind in the Lord, although it was not easy for them to be of one speech in expressing it. Buchanan gave his young colleague, as might be expected, a most gracious welcome. He writes on the morning after the election as follows:

"2 SANDYFORD PLACE,

"*September* 4, 1866.

"MY DEAR MR. REITH,—

"It affords me very great pleasure to inform you that at the congregational meeting of the Free College Church, held last night, you were unanimously elected to be colleague minister, and that, with equal unanimity, a resolution was passed to apply to the Presbytery to-morrow for the moder-

ation of a call in due course. It is a most gratifying feature of this whole movement that the utmost harmony has prevailed throughout, both in the committee and in the congregation; a token surely that the hand of the Lord is in it.

"I am,

"Yours faithfully,

"ROBERT BUCHANAN."

With even more appreciation Dr. Buchanan is reported to have said to the congregation, "In providing me with such a colleague as Mr. Reith—a colleague who combines, in no common degree, with the fresh sympathies and affectionate ardour peculiar to his time of life, that solid learning and that Christian gravity which will let no man despise his youth—I believe you have taken a step not more conducive to my personal comfort during the remaining years of my ministry, than to the true prosperity and highest welfare of the College Church. While, therefore, I congratulate myself on this event, not less sincerely do I congratulate you."

But there are other letters and, what is more important, other circumstances which indicate that it would have been better if Reith had become only an assistant to Buchanan, and that for a time. It is significant that in the "Life

of Dr. Robert Buchanan," by a most accomplished writer, Dr. Norman L. Walker, a book fittingly entitled *An Ecclesiastical Biography*, Reith's name is mentioned merely with a few passing references. Yet he fulfilled a nine years' colleagueship. The broad and pertinent truth is that George Reith was an evangelist, an expositor of the scriptures of rare insight, and an impassioned preacher of the Gospel. In fulfilling that function he found himself, and he exercised his already recognized powers. He revealed himself when, in some address of spiritual insight, he made his vehement and moving appeals to the conscience of the man, whose life is not hid with Christ in God, and to the chivalry of the believer, whom Christ had called to follow Him. But in his colleagueship his message did not find its requisite atmosphere. The glow was chilled ; the gleam paled. His fervour was seen only when, ever and again, his native intensity and his personal passion broke out. Had he begun, as all young men should begin, in a congregation where he would have had liberty of word, and an unimpeded access to the people, with the whole cure of souls in his charge, he would have found a response which was both enlightening and stimulating, and he would not have spent nine

years sadly conscious of the shadow which fell upon his path.

That truth may seem to require assuring evidence and that was given almost unexpectedly when D. L. Moody came to Glasgow in 1873. Young Reith was in the seventh year of his ministry and the thirtieth year of his age. Dr. Buchanan, true to the controlling purpose of his life, was sympathetic, but did not share in the enthusiasm which Moody aroused, to so marked a degree, among the Christian people of Glasgow. But Reith was at once quickened to a new power. Many of the younger members of his congregation, such as William A. Campbell and William Smith, received a fresh baptism, and responded to their young minister's voice and his appeal with a fearless confession. Reith became one of Moody's most devoted helpers, so that when Moody went to Dundee and found his reception not so warm as he had expected, he longed for the help of some of the young men who had gathered round him in Glasgow. He urged John F. Ewing (afterwards minister of Toorak, Melbourne), one of Reith's intimates, and his companion on the tour to Greece, to secure a band of Glasgow ministers to help in the campaign. The first name he suggested, the name he pressed with

extreme desire, was that of George Reith. As all are aware, who know the record of this revival, Moody knew a man with a strange insight when he was brought into contact with him. The worshippers at the College Church were struck by the new note of appeal in their young minister's message, even by the new ring in his voice. From that day Reith put on strength. His congregation entered upon a season of refreshing. A petition was presented to him, signed by a long list of the leading Christian women in Glasgow, to continue the Bible Lectures which Moody had instituted, and they made the significant stipulation that as the Hall might be too small for the numbers attending, the Church might be made ready for their occupation.

Still more significant both of Reith's earnest evangelism, and of his intense devotion to it, is the following letter addressed to an office-bearer whose interest he was eager to enlist:

"My Dear Sir,—

"May I invite, with the utmost earnestness, your personal aid and sympathy in connection with the approaching fortnight of special evangelistic services to be conducted in our Church by an evangelist who has been honoured of God in this work, both in our own country and in

America. In him we have obtained one whose graces and gifts will make him most acceptable to the congregation.

" At the same time, such meetings, if they are to prove what we all pray and desire they should prove, a means of stirring Christians up to a renewed zeal in personal holiness, and personal effort for Christ's cause, as well as of bringing to the knowledge of our Lord those who yet are ignorant of Him, must be cordially and continuously supported by ourselves, and especially by those of us who hold office in the congregation. You will, may I venture to suggest, remember these meetings in your private and family prayers, and both favour us with your presence and do all that lies in your power to interest the members of your own family in them, besides, as you have opportunity, making them known to others.

" We try from time to time to select the most suitable instruments for this work, but God gives the increase. Let us, therefore, beseech Him, in the faith that He will hear us, for that spiritual blessing which He is only too willing to give to those who ask, and to those who depend not on the instrument, but on His Spirit. The meetings will begin on Sabbath evening, 1st October, and will continue for a fortnight. Cards with full details will be ready for cir-

culation on Sabbath next. Although the meetings are primarily intended for our own congregation, it is, of course, hoped that our neighbours and other friends will also attend. They will be heartily welcome.

"Much will depend on our fervent prayer. A preliminary Prayer Meeting of the congregation will, therefore, be held in the College Hall on Tuesday evening, 26th September, at 8 o'clock; and others will be arranged and announced afterwards. Fully anticipating your Christian co-operation; and praying that you may feel, in consequence of these services, more of Christ's presence in your own life, and in your home.

"Believe me,

"Yours with much regard,

"GEORGE REITH."

It is simple truth to say that no man and no household receiving such a letter, and that is only one of many, could fail to be at least aroused from any apathy, and almost certainly quickened to a new faith, and led into a more consistent testimony, by such an appeal from the young evangelist of the College Church.

One event gladdened the course of these early years of his ministry. One of the leading members of the congregation, Mr. Robert

Handyside, a Glasgow shipowner, invited his young minister to spend a short holiday with his household at his country residence, Fardel,[1] in Glenfarg. Mr. Handyside expected a visit from the daughter of one of his London friends, and confessed that he and his wife had some anticipation that this young English girl might be a life-companion to their young minister. But love laughs at more than locksmiths, and romance will not set its music to any arbitrary key. Her younger sister, also invited, came north, and it was at once evident that young George Reith was greatly attracted. On her part there was a certain diffidence to leave London, and a still greater concern about the duties involved as the mistress of a Scottish manse. But the issue Reith sought was reached, and the marriage with Miss Adah Mary Weston, the daughter of Mr. Edward Weston, Westbourne Terrace, London, was celebrated on 6th July 1870. The marriage was sealed by a life-long fellowship of nearly fifty years of mutual and deepening devotion.

Not only in the generous hospitalities of the home, and in the grace of her social intercourse with the families of the congregation, but in her interest in the work and in the agencies of the congregation Mrs. Reith manifested the depth

[1] Then known as Paris House.

and sincerity of her desire to be a true yokefellow in her husband's ministry. The men and women of the North Woodside Mission engaged her solicitous care. Of their too common necessities she was mindful in their relief. In their sorrows she was tender in her word of sympathy and generous in her remembrance of their need. Especially in the meetings which were carried on to strengthen the women who were living hard and constraining lives in narrow homes and bearing many burdens she was unresting in her efforts of strengthening and solace. In the organizations designed to bring brightness into the evening hour of the younger women she was eager and assiduous. Beyond these especial spheres she fulfilled a ministry, for which the affluence and refinement of her father's home had prepared her in an unusual degree, by her active share in the work of the Kyrle Society of which she was the founder and the honorary secretary for many years. With its object of bringing the refining influences of natural and artistic beauty into the homes of the people Mrs. Reith had a distinctive desire. Less known most naturally was her membership of a company of compassionate women associated together to rescue the magdalens of the great city, in whose need a home of shelter was maintained

and for whose restoration many little-known offices of relief and of watchfulness were fulfilled. All of these services were rendered in the name and after the manner of her Lord. Such unselfish and often unknown sacrifices were dear to Dr. Reith's heart, and they expressed and strengthened the covenant of their love and loyalty to each other.

VI: THE MINISTER OF THE COLLEGE CHURCH

DR. ROBERT BUCHANAN died in Rome on 31st March 1875. On the evening before his death he had expressed a sense of weariness and discomfort, but no one anticipated that in the morning light they would look on his face even more calm and benignant in death than in life. All Glasgow mourned, and when the body was borne from the College Church to the Necropolis, to be buried almost under the shadow of the monument to John Knox, the long procession of mourners passed through the streets lined with sympathetic citizens. Even more notable was the fact that Christian men of all the Reformed Communions walked side by side to the grave, in token of their esteem for his character. It had become common knowledge that underneath the placid features and the undemonstrative manner, there flowed a deep current of natural kindness and Christian affection. The *Glasgow Herald* of that date summed up the public opinion in its witness, " Sometimes one could not look at him without

thinking what a fine ambassador he would have made in some German capital, with his stately appearance, his splendid courtesy, his perfect reticence, and his shrewd insight into men and things." No more sincere mourner followed the *cortège* than his young colleague, who had won his regard and affection. The tribute Reith paid to him, when he addressed the sorrowing congregation, was recognized to be as apposite and discerning as it was instinct with tender feeling.

This event marked the close of the first chapter of the history of the College Church. But the introduction to the second chapter had been entered upon before Dr. Buchanan's death. His increasing years, his concentration on the duties falling upon him as the most outstanding ecclesiastic of the Church, and as a master in its Assemblies, had given his colleague the larger share in the work of the congregation. Although still a young man, not much beyond the age at which many preachers begin their ministry, he was already bearing the real burden of the charge, and he had put on strength, and attained a fully-recognized authority. Above all, and most vital of all, he had caught the respect and the affection of the office-bearers and the devotion of the people. His own in-

tensely impassioned nature—that forthright and vehement ardour, both towards truth and honour, as well as toward all personalities, of all rank and station, had met with a full response. He passed to his unhindered service, endowed by the reverence, and rich in the love of the people. For thirty-five years, until the appointment of his first colleague, he was the minister of the College Church alone.

This ministry, of more than a third of a century, was signalized by the even tenor of its history, the unfaltering apostolic witness of its pastor, and the harmony of his relationships, responded to by the deepening devotion of the people. There were few changes in these years, beyond those inevitable to the transitoriness of all human affairs, and the transiency of men's lives. There were no dramatic episodes, no unexpected happenings, no transforming events. The congregation grew in numbers and in influence, and great peace was upon its Israel. The building of a manse to lessen the distance of the minister's home from his sphere of labour was a mark of solicitude. The development of the agencies, and especially of the Home Mission enterprises of the congregation, gave proof of the dynamic of his leadership. The succession of able office-bearers, so frequently of father and

son, marked the hold of the minister and the Church on its families. The increasing contributions to the missionary agencies of the Church marked the fuller vision and the nobler conception of the kingdom of Christ, which had caught and held the minds of the people. One of the notable facts of the annual financial reports is that the subscriptions "For Others," and especially to the ministries of the Gospel at home and abroad, were always more than double those "For Ourselves." Indeed it raises questions in the minds of those who may read those old reports, when it is noted that while the annual contributions sometimes touched £8,000, the congregational contribution to the stipend remained at £500 a year, with a manse. Here plainly there is a looking not on one's own things, but there seems to be a lack of due regard for the minister and his well-being.

Yet had the members of the Church in Glasgow generally been asked to distinguish the most evident features of this congregation, they would have affirmed that, among the most outstanding, was the *personnel* of the membership. It began its history with a Kirk Session, whose members were recognized as pre-eminent among the citizens both for their character and their

ability. That continued through all the years. It is fitting to honour this page with some of the names of these notable Glasgow citizens, set in order of time, as indeed all might be set down with a due sense of pride. The readers of the annals of the congregational life will find them all in its Records, and realize the tribute that such a list pays to the minister whose leadership they followed. As was perhaps inevitable, apart from every other attraction, many of the Professors of the Free Church College were among its office-bearers. Principal Fairbairn, Principal Douglas, Professor Bruce and Principal Denney all served in the eldership. In Education there was Dr. Thomas Morrison, so long the esteemed Rector of the Normal Seminary, who served as Session Clerk for many years. There was Edmund Boyd, a skilled educationist, and Richard Chalmers, and Frederick Laing, both masters in the art of teaching. But as was most natural in a city like Glasgow, most of the leading members were busy in the finance, the commerce, and the industry of the Clyde Valley. Some of these names demand a reference. There was Nathaniel Stevenson and his even better known son, James Stevenson of Hailie ; Patrick Playfair ; John S. Templeton ; William Lochhead ; Robert McCowan ; John

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MacLaren; James Reid Stewart; Robert S. Handyside; George Reith, the senior; James Fleming; Robert Ross; Alexander Stephen of Kelly; Sir William Collins; Alexander S. Baird; Walter MacLean; George Moffatt, who also served as Session Clerk; R. Hope Robertson; Alexander Gillies; Alexander Balfour; Thomas MacKenzie—all, with their fellows, instant and constant in gift and service. To recall younger men there were William A. Campbell and Matthew Pearce Campbell, James Muirhead, Nicol Paton Brown, Alexander Stephen, and Frederick Stephen, Sir William Smith, Laurence and Archibald Hope Robertson; David Gillies, Finlay M. Ross, Charles J. Findlay and J. Murray Tomory—some of whom are still active in the service of the Church. Such was the conspicuous public repute and commercial standing of these men, that it was said, with a pleasant humour, that if the Chamber of Commerce were summoned to meet within the session room of the College Church a quorum could be formed by its office-bearers. As significant is the roll of students for the ministry whose young minds, whatever may be said of their later and still more determining experiences, were toned to the high keynote of the fellowship of the faith. Among these were two

of Dr. Reith's sons, Archibald and George Douglas, who began his service as a missionary in India, Andrew Sutherland of Dundee, Lewis Muirhead of Broughty Ferry, George H. Morrison of Wellington Church, Glasgow, and James Moffatt, now of Union Seminary, New York—all of whom were students with honours, recognized as men of pre-eminent intellectual force. As significant were the bands of men and women who were eager in their service among the poor and outcast, and especially the fallen, all lavish in their gifts and self-sacrificing in their consecration to those causes they knew to be so dear to the heart of their minister. The two sisters of Bethany, that Dorcas who cared for the widows, that mother of Mark who kept the open door of hospitality, and that Priscilla whom Paul so commended, had their succession in these women of the College Church.

This rapid recital leads us on, and into, the inmost secret of this ministry. That is to be found in Reith's power as a preacher of the Word, and especially the Word of his Master. There is no constant stream without a spring. There are no abundant fruits without a root of vital energy. It was as they waited on the ministry of the Word, that these men and women were inspired to their unwearying and

resourceful service. There must be few who worshipped within the walls of the College Church who did not come out to declare, whatever criticism they may have passed on some parts of the service, " It is good for me to have been here." The ritual of the service, the chasteness and even charm of the music, for Reith was responsive, in a rare degree, to all things lovely that meet the eye and fall on the ear, and the solemn awe and sense of the presence of God in the utterance of the prayers—all hushed the worshipper into a silence in which he heard the still small voice of the Spirit. And then the message—never fashioned to catch the popular ear, never intent on any topic of the hour, never concerned with any slogan resounding with the clamour of passion, never enforced by any commonplace or flashy rhetoric, was always high and serious. It was intense and convicting, sometimes vehement, both in word and attitude, and always personal in its appeal.

It is indeed remarkable that this preacher of so vivid and so human a gospel seldom sought illustrations from the masters of literature, and still more infrequently appealed to historic events, or to the incidents which demanded headlines in the journals of the day. The

listener heard no anecdotes, much less personal reminiscences. He was not arrested by apt quotations, or aroused from any indifference or apathy by epigrams. That seems the more strange to those who knew how catholic was his range of reading, how deep was his insight into the grace and mystery of all Art, how responsive he was to the poets of passion, and how fascinating he could be in recounting the incidents of his many travels. His lectures on Savonarola, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and Ruskin, disclose both his knowledge and his eager appreciation. Yet he never quotes from any of them, unless in some passing reference. The reason was clear to those who knew him well. To him the Church was the Sanctuary of God, the Upper Room of the Master where he was ever saying, "Behold my hands and my feet, the way to Emmaus and its guest-room, where Jesus made the hearts of men to burn within them. That made some of the common and admired allusions, and even the interesting references of the average preacher, seem out of place. This lack of colour was one reason why some hearers, to whom a deft citation from a diligent collector's note-books, and an apt allusion to gleanings from the daily press, are instantly appealing, were not held by his message. He

often admitted that he was not a popular preacher in the accepted sense of the term. His mood was often stilling and chastening, as the sermons at the close of this memoir will prove. Yet it must not be forgotten that these selected sermons give only an imperfect impression of the moral and spiritual passion of the message, and of its power to arouse all the spiritual impulses within a man. The reader would need to have the impassioned tones, the urgent gestures, the flushing face, and the eyes of intense desire, so marked in the delivery of his sermon, to understand the power of this winner of souls.

The most distinctive feature of a service conducted by this preacher of the Word was the atmosphere, solemnizing, quickening, inspiring which he created. As men breathed in it faith and love put on their strength. It was never the writer's privilege to join this Christian fellowship as a worshipper in its pews, although he is able to understand the witness to it, through his call, at times, to preach from its pulpit. Many have spoken of it, as they recalled that experience, and few have ever referred to the worship of the College Church without some reference to it. Indeed some never refer to the tragedy of the burning of the

spacious building without speaking with deep emotion of the hallowed hours of both its silence and its song.[1] That was due not merely to the decorum of a courteous people. It was not a mere stillness that was felt by the ear. There was a hush upon the spirit. There was more. There was a sense that common words, common ideals, common thoughts were unfitting for this sanctuary. The silence fell upon the soul. Of course there were some visitors who confessed that this prevailing sense of awe, with its schooling of the emotions, was neither desired nor appreciated. It must be recognized that it was not helpful to those good folk, who like to begin with genial handshakings, hearty words of welcome, and, at times, a rousing hymn or two. This hush and quiet so affected the members of the College Church, that they were not able to enter into the eager stir, and even the hum and throb of public worship in other congregations. But, in our Father's house there are many mansions, and the members of the College Church sought its door as the way into

[1] The writer would record his indebtedness, in this regard, to the Rev. J. Fairley Daly and Mrs. Fairley Daly, so honoured in the United Free Church for their life-long service and unstinted generosity to the cause of its Foreign Missions, both loyal members and intimate friends, to the last hour of their beloved minister's life.

a place of rest and quietness, in whose silences they worshipped God.

The most impressive fact was the message of the preacher. Reith was always a preacher of the Word. To turn over the pages of his manuscripts and of his carefully prepared lectures, is to find that their controlling thought and purpose is to preach the Word of God, and especially in the teaching of Christ. As all preachers know, and as the seemingly strange fact confirms, all printed sermons, even of such men as Chalmers, or Beecher, or Parker, or Spurgeon, lose not only their vogue, but much of their power, when they are printed. Every preacher, except One, has a message only for his own generation. But the preachers whose names are still recalled with an expression of gratitude, and those whose pages keep somewhat of their value for patient readers, are all preachers of the Word. The topical preacher with his shrewd eye for what is attractive ; the man of clever and pointed references ; that other who will discuss the outspoken novel of the day, or that other who will deal with social problems, and estimate the trend of public opinion—all have their function. But to be up-to-date is surely to be soon out-of-date. Preaching to the times, as good Bishop Leighton said, is not so vital as

preaching for eternity. The preacher who abides through all the ages is the preacher of the Word.

In this volume, at its close, there are to be found four—only four—of Reith's sermons. They have been chosen, not because they can be distinguished as pre-eminent in their form and diction, or even singular in their inherent value. They have been selected because they exhibit the four features of George Reith as a preacher of the Word. In the first, based on the words "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments" (Psalm cxix. 176), we hear the preacher as the Evangelist of the Word. In the second, a penetrating study of Samson, whose supreme moment is expressed in his poignant cry, "Remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God" (Judges xvi. 28), we have the preacher as the Expositor of the Word. He gathers up the teaching of a long passage of Scripture to set forth the moral and spiritual issues of sin and grace, of witness and sacrifice, as disclosed in the soul tragedy of an Old Testament believer. In the third, from the text "Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God" (1 Cor. vii. 24), there is the Christian Ethical Teacher, deeply sympathetic with the

social unrest of the time, recognizing the rights and the duties of both Labour and Capital, with a statement of the ruling truths engrossed in the word of God, and especially in the teaching of Christ. It was in that character he delivered his address, when Moderator of the Assembly, which rang through the whole land. In the fourth, the daring interpretation of the passage, "In my Father's house are many mansions" (St. John xiv. 1–3), there is the Mystical Preacher of the Word, with his vision of the unseen, his assurance of the nearness and reality of the spiritual world, his joyous and satisfied belief in the realm of eternal being and quenchless love. In a number of studies of the Transfiguration of Christ he elaborates this transcendent message. He calls on men to regard that transfigured face of Jesus, as both the revelation and the interpretation of the spiritual world, become visible to the eyes of men. That he applies to Art, and he calls upon the painter and the sculptor, as well as the poet, to fulfil their purifying office of revealing and interpreting the beautiful. If Art fulfilled that service, and did not prostitute its power to corrupt men's hearts and to lead them to see and delight only in the seen, and sometimes the sensual, they would understand the world

around them and the world within, and become prophets to humanity. This preacher of the Word consummates his message in his Commentary on the Gospel of St. John, in which he shows not only his so adequate scholarship, but his insight into the mind of that disciple whom Jesus loved—who had entered into the secret of the Lord. Dr. Reith's exposition of the Gospel of St. John is so touched with his mystic power that it remains, apart from all critical questions as to the authorship and date of the Gospel, a self-proving interpretation of the devout Christian man's knowledge of Christ.

It may be that some are inclined to think that this estimate of this preacher of the Word is too high, because of the absence of the crowd, whom some preachers, let us rejoice to say, gather around them. But it is a fitting reply to that criticism to cite the evidence of some whose names entitle them to be set in the first rank of witnesses.

Dr. Marcus Dods, who so early admitted the young student into his fellowship, wrote as follows :

"My Dear Reith,—

"I hope you will not think it patronizing of me if I say how very much I enjoyed your

service yesterday. No man in our Church could have done it better. I would not undertake to name any one who would have done it as well. This was the feeling, expressed freely, of others besides myself. For my own part I wish you would print it somewhere that we might fix some of its ideas. It was a wise providence that prevented me from fulfilling this duty, which you undertook in my place, and gave to us the benefit of that fine piece of work.

"Yours, in all regard,
"MARCUS DODS."

Professor A. B. Bruce, always a most discerning and straightforward critic, writes in his own vein :

"MY DEAR MINISTER,—

"Thanks for that admirable sermon this afternoon which I am grateful to have heard. The man that can preach that sermon should preach many more of the same kind, and I am led to make a suggestion. It occurs to me that you might give us afternoon sermons in a succession, one in each month for the children, one for young men, and one on social or industrial topics, handled in the religious spirit. All of us would go with the definite expectation of help

and blessing. Meantime, again I thank you for an able, wise, eloquent utterance to our youth. God bless it to us, the hearers.

"Yours ever,

"A. B. Bruce."

The Rev. Principal Denney was never given to any extravagant eulogy; yet he writes:

"My Dear Dr. Reith,—

"Will you excuse me if I take the opportunity of saying with what intense appreciation and joy I heard you on Sunday evening. There is no Gospel that can be preached at all but the apostolic Gospel, and no privilege to compare with either speaking, or hearing, it. I know, therefore, how inappropriate it is that I should offer you a volume of sermons: it is a commodity in which you can easily give gold for brass to the rest of us. But you have a right to know the Gospel I preach, and I should feel bad if I do not send you a copy. It does not keep me from feeling that I have 'need to be baptized of thee.'

"With kindest regards,

"Ever yours most sincerely,

"James Denney."

Another testimony may be given of one,

whose confession of uplift and of spiritual energy, is even more appealing—Mr. William A. Campbell.

"My Beloved Minister,—

"I cannot refrain from sending you a few lines with respect to our evening service last night. It was a rare spiritual feast, and I am sure you yourself must have recognized that the Almighty Spirit was moving through you—a prepared instrument—on a congregation responsive to the truths, the great verities, as they fell from your lips. I have been wondering if it did not portend that some visitation of a special character is on its way to all in our communion, and that there is not a call to united prayer that our gracious God may come to us in convincing and converting power. What a lot of young life is about us, and what openings we might have if the way was made clear!

"Ever affectionately yours,

"Wm. Alex. Campbell."

One other letter, from which the name of the writer may be wisely withheld, touches an even more tender note.

"The Western Club.

"Beloved Pastor,—

"Just a line to say with what intense delight and spiritual satisfaction I, and others, sat and

listened to your sermon last night. I never heard you preach a clearer or more tender Gospel. We saw Jesus in His grace and tenderness. We felt His breath upon our souls, saw His inexpressible loveliness, and—not a few of us—yielded ourselves to Him in a fresh self-surrender. What a power you have of making the person of our Lord stand out in such fashion as to cause us to see Him, and to bow at His feet in adoration and praise. We thank Him for so empowering His instrument, as He did you."

We can understand such letters as these, and a large number have been found, carefully treasured as most evident messages of courage and comfort, when we read a few sentences from a letter sent to his Office-bearers.

"Grace, mercy, and peace from God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be multiplied upon you. I pray above all things that you may prosper and be in health, even as your souls prosper. We are often anxious about things of unspeakably less moment; things which the lapse of a year will swallow in oblivion. Were we greatly concerned about possessing the salvation of God in its fulness, we should be happier men and women, more fruitful branches in the true vine.

"Beloved friends, there are men with eyes as keen as a vulture's for the good things of this world. There are men who are strong as lions in the pursuit and capture of the prizes of life. But there is a path which the vulture's eye hath not seen, and the lion's whelps have not trodden. It is the way of holiness: the unclean do not pass over it, but the redeemed of the Lord are found upon it. As they walk forward, taking the rough with its smooth, the joy of the Lord crowns their heads; and presently all sorrow and sighing shall flee away. May that path be yours, and may this be your experience in Jesus Christ!"

It must not be thought that this exalted spirit was out of sympathy with the broad humanities of life, or lacking in the graces of a genial fellowship with his intimates. His affections were as intense as they were abiding. His appreciation of the joys of social intercourse was as evident as it was discerning. No one, even in secret, charged him with ingratitude. Indeed his protest against even the approach to any betrayal of what should not be spoken of was instant and keen. His habit of keeping the letters of his friends is the proof of that secret place in which he treasured his recollection

of them. Every service given to him was acknowledged with his own grace of reference. Here is a letter to Dr. Thomas Morrison, the rector of the Stow College for the Education of Teachers, so long the session clerk of the congregation, which reveals both his mind, and the manner of its expression.

"FREE COLLEGE MANSE,
"GLASGOW.
"*6th October* 1892.

"DEAR DR. MORRISON,—

"Communion seasons will be associated, to the end of my life, with the thought of you; and I cannot allow another to pass without offering you, my staunch and loyal friend, a tribute, as the expression of the regard which I must ever cherish for you, and of the memory of a quarter of a century's services—discharged so that I am sure no minister in our Church could feel more at ease than it has been my happy fortune to be.

"Will you do me the pleasure of accepting the new edition of Shakespeare which I have asked McLehose to send you? With every grateful feeling, believe me, Dear Dr. Morrison,

"Yours most truly,
"GEO. REITH."

Another of his intimates once said in an hour of reminiscence, "I would not like to have lived my life without knowing and loving George Reith, in some small measure of his desire toward me."

VII: THE PROOF OF A MINISTRY

THE counsels of a Mr. Greatheart, who is intent on the practical training of the Christian ministry, are engrossed in the Second Epistle to Timothy. They consummate in the injunction, "Do the work of an evangelist; make full proof of thy ministry." This is the solicitous appeal of a man of experience who is keeping in mind one of the subtle temptations of the approved preacher. To a man with a gift of eloquent speech, and a consequent power of moving appeal, the function of the evangelist is one of ease and exhilaration. Every one, who has addressed a throng of men and women, or even a gathering of simple folk in a humble place of prayer, has marked their absorbed stillness, rejoiced in the response to his appeals, and heard the open confession of their faith and repentance, understands the fascination of doing the work of an evangelist. But apart from the seduction both to pride and to passion, which has so often overcome men of world-wide name, there is the temptation to neglect the less con-

spicuous, more exacting, and at times somewhat humbling duties of this high calling. The oversight of the agencies, the visitation of the sick and the aged, the shepherd-like watchfulness of those going astray, the wistful dealing with the heedless and the unfriendly—these ministries are left unfulfilled. They are costly of time and strength and patience. But they are the washing of the disciple's feet, and there the Master has seen all His disciples fail. So this New Testament teacher adds to his counsel to "do the work of an evangelist" the more inclusive injunction. It is rendered more accurately than in the Authorized Version, "Discharge to the full the duties of a minister." Yet the reading in our time-honoured English translation penetrates to the inner meaning of the counsel, when it fastens on the proof given by a more faithfully fulfilled service.

The full proof of Dr. George Reith's ministry is an uplifting record. It is manifested, as we have noted, in the faith and the fashion of the life of those who, through his message, were conformed to the likeness of Christ, whom purity made strong, and gentleness made great. But this is the more arresting fact that, under his discharge of all the obligations of his ministry, and especially through his leadership and

guidance, the compelling power of his example and the contagion of his zeal, these men and women of the College Church gave themselves to the Christian service, even to the point of sacrifice. To use the lovely and haunting figure of Jesus, they brought forth "fruit—fruit that shall remain."

These fruits that remain can be seen in many of the incidents of this Christian fellowship. But they stand out in three distinctive witnesses. There is no room in these few pages for full details, but even a brief record of these three abiding witnesses will be convincing enough. These three are, the North Woodside Mission; the Boys' Brigade; and the Stevenson Memorial Church.

I

The history of the North Woodside Mission is touched with Christian chivalry. It is to be classed along with the inspiring record of the Wynd Mission which left so deep an impression on George Reith's heart. In the early years of the College Church the eye looked out from its doorway upon open fields. Two little villages lying about half a mile away, almost on the bank of the river Kelvin, were in the foreground. At that point two winding country roads—the

South Woodside and the North Woodside—converged to cross the river at a low and narrow bridge. The rows and the cottages of the villages were occupied by artisans and labourers. Here the young minister of the College Church saw a field waiting for the sower. The work began in the little meeting in South Woodside, but the field was too limited, and a city improvement required the demolition of some of the homes. The mission centred in the district of North Woodside, and this larger opportunity began to call out the latent resources of the congregation. Its younger members responded to the call of their leader with steadfastness and self-denial. There were especial efforts to win the young of the non-Church-going and to occupy both the mind and the time of the adolescents. As a natural consequence there was a succession of awakenings and revivals, when not only the young and unstained, but many, who were as careless in their life as they were godless in their spirit, were born again, and some of these abide to this day. At the same time philanthropic men and women spent hours in sympathetic visiting and unostentatious charity. Generous hands were ready with their gifts in cases of necessity. But most notable was the large staff of single-minded workers who

carried on the services, organized by men of well-known business ability, and led by far-seeing young men and women whose names are cherished in fields of action afar from this beginning of their consecration. At first these meetings were gathered in meanly equipped little rooms. But the congregation, after some inadequate enlargements, swept the ground clear, and built, at a cost of £7,000, the most complete suite of halls, with other necessary premises, which Glasgow had seen. Some conception of the work may be given by the fact that the number of Sabbath School scholars rose to 744, with 57 teachers, and that the membership, who claimed the North Woodside Mission as their home, rose to 244, with a large number of adherents.

But the Time Table of the work of a week will show the enterprise and devotion of the College congregation at a glance (page 135).

The personality, whose unfaltering purpose and spiritual passion guided and inspired this band of workers, was Dr. George Reith.

II

The second witness of the full proof of this ministry is The Boys' Brigade. The whole world should know and revere the name of the

Sabbath ..	*Morning*—Fellowship Meeting for Young Men ..	Mr. Finlay M. Ross.
	Morning—Boys' Brigade Bible Class	Mr. Wm. A. Smith and Officers.
	Forenoon—Divine Service (11.30)	Missionary.
	After Forenoon Service—Tract Distribution ..	Mr. John Wylie and others.
	Afternoon—Sabbath Schools (2.30)	*Senior*—Mr. H. M. Arthur (Supt.), Mr. J. M. Tomory (Secy.), and Assistants.
		Junior—Mr. J. A. Balfour and Assistants.
		Infant—Mr. E. E. Reith and Assistants.
	Young Women's Class (5 p.m.)	Miss M'Laren.
	Fellowship Meeting for Young Men (5 p.m.)	Mr. W. A. Smith.
	Evening (6.30 p.m.)—Evangelistic Service	The Missionary.
Monday ..	*Afternoon*—Mothers' Meeting	Mrs. Reith and Mrs. M'Laren.
	Evening—Savings Bank	Mr. Donald Macdonald and Mr. H. M. Parker.
	Evening—Library	Mr. James Lyall.
	Evening—North Woodside Girls' Club	Miss Macphail.
	Evening—Young Women's Industrial Meeting ..	Miss Brown and Assistants.
	Evening—Sewing Class ..	Miss Balfour and Assistants.
Tuesday ..	*Evening*—Boys' Brigade Gymnastic Class ..	Mr. Geo. Orr and Mr. P. Stewart.
	Evening—Mission Choir, Lesser Hall	Mr. John Wylie.
Wednesday	*Evening*—Prayer Meeting ..	The Missionary.
Thursday	*Evening*—Boys' Brigade Drill and Band Practice ..	Mr. W. A. Smith and Officers.
Friday ..	*Evening*—Band of Hope ..	Mr. John Thomson.
Saturday..	*Evening*—Gospel Temperance Meeting	Mr. John Thomson.

Every Week-day *Evening*—Separate Reading and Recreation Rooms for the Young Men's Club, and for the Boys' Brigade.

first Chaplain of this noble organization, in whose soul its purpose was conceived. In October, 1883, one of the most devoted, as well as most resourceful and far-visioned of the young workers in the Woodside Mission was the teacher of the Sabbath Morning Boys' Bible Class, now known as Sir William A. Smith. He was struggling with the problem of how to retain the senior boys in the Sunday School. At fourteen they felt too old for it, and if they left they were, in many cases, neglected at the most critical stage of life. The boys who did remain were compelled to do so by their parents, and they were consequently unruly and difficult to handle. Young William Smith was an ardent volunteer officer, and he knew well the value of discipline. He conceived the happy idea that if these boys could be brought under discipline, and banded together with *esprit de corps*, the task of teaching would be more effective, and the boys would learn habits which would endure throughout their lives. With the help of two friends, J. R. and J. B. Hill, who acted as lieutenants, he formed, on 4th October 1883, a Company of some thirty boys, and he named it *The Boys' Brigade.*

The object of The Boys' Brigade, "The advancement of Christ's Kingdom among boys,

and the promotion of habits of obedience, reverence, discipline, self-respect and all that tends toward a true Christian manliness," has been kept in regard. The care with which the Founder nursed the movement, with this high object always before him, guarding it from the deviations of extremists in any direction, has borne fruit in a world-wide service. The movement has spread to other lands until the membership now numbers over 120,000. It was William Smith's unique personality which influenced the movement, although he himself remained in the background. Many who realize its value have never heard of the man to whose inspiration it owed its birth and its power. But his work did not pass unrecognized for, in 1909, he received the honour of Knighthood at the hands of King Edward VII. His last conscious moment was at a meeting of the Brigade Executive in London, where he passed away on 10th May 1914, in his sixtieth year. He died at the post of duty. His life was a life lived for others—a life devoted to Christ's service for that host of boys, to so many of whom The Boys' Brigade has been the supreme influence of their lives. Any one who will read the letters written by Sir William Smith to that minister, whom he loved and served, will realize his often

confessed debt to the first Chaplain of The Boys' Brigade.

This No. 1 Glasgow Company of The Boys' Brigade still retains its premier place, in every sense of the term. The College Church and congregation have passed away, but the mission work in North Woodside is still carried on. It is now connected with Stevenson Memorial Church, whose minister is proud to succeed Dr. Reith in the office of Chaplain. The numbers on the roll are 116 boys with a staff of fifteen officers. Its fully manned and ably conducted Band is one of sixteen instruments, and it is distinguished by a skill in rendering its music with a volume and a tone that army officers can cordially praise. Even its buglers are known in the streets, in every march-out, for the vigour of their blast. One of the events of the year is the Annual Display, in the great Cameronians' Drill Hall, holding many thousands, of their exercises and athletic feats. At this annual event the wide surrounding spaces and galleries are crowded with onlookers, who are hard pressed against the walls to leave the arena free for the marchings and evolutions of the Company. The service of inspecting and approving is one eagerly coveted by distinguished men, and no one of these—although they

are often army officers of high repute—has ever spent the evening without expressing himself more than satisfied with the discipline and grace made manifest. What is still more remarkable is that the attendances on Sunday morning at the Bible Class, held at half-past nine o'clock, have a record equal to that on the evenings of the drill. After the recent Annual Display, presided over by the Earl of Home, every one of the 116 members on parade was present next morning at the Sunday Bible Class, in spite of the straining exercises of the evening before. Its Captain, G. Stanley Smith, is Sir William Smith's elder son, and this ideal successor of his father holds the first Chaplain's name in as sincere a reverence.

III

The third witness to the full proof of this ministry is the Stevenson Memorial Church. It was inevitable that such a Mission, so fully equipped both in its premises and its organization, and so devoutly and patiently served, should grow into a Church. The young men and women who had been led into the faith, and were now busy in the service of the many skilfully adapted organizations, had no other appealing place of worship. The large number

of converts to the faith, among the older attenders, were loyal to the endeared place of their spiritual birth. The College Church was faced with the problem of the future of this many-featured gathering thronging the building both on Sundays and week-days. At this same time the Free Church Presbytery of Glasgow had been considering the necessity of building Churches in the rapidly growing suburbs of the city. Dr. Robert Howie, one of its leading Home Mission ministers, brought forward a somewhat daring, but most attractive, proposal to ask each of the wealthier congregations to defray the cost of one of these new Churches. Dr. Reith gave him the most assuring encouragement. The result was that plans were drawn for a Church where this Woodside Mission would find a home. The College Church congregation made an enthusiastic response. The estimate of the cost of a suitable and most comely building was about £10,000. The oldest office-bearer of the College Church was Mr. James Stevenson of Hailie, near Largs, and he at once promised a liberal contribution. When the almost inspired suggestion was made that the new Church should be named after his father, Nathaniel Stevenson—one of the founders of the College Church—he added to his response

the promise that he "would make the building worthy of the name it was to bear."

Nathaniel Stevenson was born in Paisley, and came to Glasgow, where he became one of its outstanding business men.[1] As early as 1815 he had been one of Dr. Chalmers's young enthusiasts, to whom the city and its godless homes and degraded people were a burden of the spirit. He became one of the foremost helpers in all the endeavours after the moral and social elevation of the masses. His record is that he was more intent upon the agencies to strengthen and to deepen the religious life of the people than to engross his repute in its annals as a leading citizen of energy and enterprise. The founding of Infant Schools, the inauguration of the Young Men's Christian Association, and afterwards of the City Mission engaged his interest and evoked his liberality. He was one of the most generous subscribers to the twenty Churches which Dr. Chalmers projected—all built in Glasgow before the year 1841. As a member of the Tron Church, who came out at the Disruption in 1843, he was the leading spirit in the building of the Free Tron Church in Dundas Street, and subsequently of

[1] Cf. *Memorials and Portraits of One Hundred Glasgow Men*, p. 291.

the College Church on the removal to Lynedoch Street. His name is recalled by his share in the founding of the Free Church College and the provision of endowments for its Chairs and scholarships. Both in the public life of the city and in the philanthropies which so ministered to the poor and the outcast Nathaniel Stevenson served God and his fellowmen in his day and generation so generously that Dr. Chalmers often referred to him as "A typical Glasgow Christian man." When George Reith came, in his young and eager enthusiasm for his Lord and His Church, no kindlier or more strengthening welcome was given him than that of this saintly man—now "meet for the inheritance." His marked courtesy is evident in every line of this letter written by a man of eighty years of age to the young preacher whom he deeply respected.

11*th February* 1867.

"My Dear Mr. Reith,—

"I know not if your manuscripts are so written that I could read what I desire to know more fully than was possible for me to hear, in my old age, in my seat. That is the case especially with the subject of last Sabbath's lecture. If you will allow me the perusal of that manu-

script, I shall be subject to any condition on which you may send it! My neighbour, Mr. Robert McLure was absent to his regret, from indisposition, and it is the only one of the lectures he has missed. I am delighted to hear from so many of the members that the course has been most profitable, especially to the young.

"I am, very Sincerely Yours,
"NATHANIEL STEVENSON."

That is the letter of a man of a devout spirit who is well aware of the exceeding value of an old man's praise in a young man's ears. It is not to be wondered at that his like-minded son responded so eagerly and so generously to the suggestion to enshrine his father's name and memory, especially in the building of a house of prayer for the people. It can be understood how instant and decided was the consent to share in the cost of this Memorial Church, with the added proviso that it must be worthy of the man whose name it was to bear. The ultimate cost of the building and of the ground beside the River Kelvin on which it was built amounted to over £21,000. Of this sum the members of the College Church had contributed rather more than £5,000. The rest of the cost

of the building together with a gift towards the purchase of a manse came from Mr. James Stevenson of Hailie, in grateful recognition of this tribute to his father's faith and work in the good cause of the Gospel.

Stevenson Memorial Church, built from plans by Messrs. Stevenson and Redfern, London, in the Norman Gothic style of architecture, is considered to be one of the most chastely beautiful in Glasgow. It stands on a fine site at the Belmont Bridge over the River Kelvin. The foundation stone was laid by Principal Rainy and it was dedicated on 27th February 1902, when Dr. Whyte of Edinburgh, at Dr. Reith's most urgent request, was the preacher. In the words of dedication he uttered with deep emotion the expression of "The grace given him of being associated with his honoured and deeply loved friend, George Reith, in this characteristic expression of the life-long passion of his heart." It was opened, most fittingly, for public worship on the next Sunday, 2nd March, by Dr. Reith himself. Professor Denney, who was now an elder of the College Church, continued the inauguration services in the afternoon. In the evening the Rev. W. M. Clow, called from the Barclay Church, Edinburgh, completed a day of widespread interest, in

STEVENSON MEMORIAL CHURCH, GLASGOW.

whose thanksgiving and prayer crowded congregations gave expression to their gratitude for the guidance of God and the gifts of His people. But the most expressive feature of this memorable day was not the expression of appreciation that the building was so distinctive in its beauty and so fitting for its purpose, as the recognition of the unselfish generosity of the minister and people of the College Church in the fulfilment of their steadfast desire to build a noble house of God where they would gather together the people of their Mission congregation. The Church has continued to fulfil the evangelic purpose of its true founder and has grown in its membership and its influence. When its first minister was called to a professorship in Glasgow College he was succeeded by the Rev. William J. Street from Willesden, London, and on his leaving for a charge in Brechin, the Rev. J. Gardner Smart, from Nairn, accepted the invitation to its ministry, and the Gospel message is still heard within its walls.

The benefactors in this good cause have not been forgotten and an endeavour has been made to perpetuate their names and their memories. In the main vestibule of the Church, at Mr. James Stevenson's express request and gift, there is a bust of his father, Nathaniel Stevenson,

after whom the Church was named. The face is finely portrayed, and it is said to present the strong and yet benign features of a man of faith and devoted sanctity who maintained his evangelistic passion to the end of his days. In the lower vestibule there is the bust of Mr. James Stevenson's brother, Nathaniel Stevenson, Junior. To this memorial a pathetic history is attached. It was Nathaniel Stevenson's cherished desire that one of his two sons should enter the Christian ministry. His younger son responded to his father's request, but he was cut off in his twenty-second year, before he had finished his curriculum. His father had this bust made after his death, and he kept it as one of his treasures, bequeathing it to his older son. Now it has found a fitting place where a fine, young and unworn face looks out with an aspect of intent devoutness on the children of the Sabbath School as they pass in to their service. In the session room there is a portrait, by an artist of distinction, of James Stevenson himself, the generous benefactor, and on the opposite wall there hangs the framed portrait of the seventeen elders of the College Church session under whose oversight the congregation was founded, and over whose membership they exercised an assiduous care for the

first two years of its congregational history. In the vestry, after the well-known and duly honoured custom of placing in this inner sanctuary the portraits of the ministers of the congregation, there was hung that of Dr. George Reith himself, and no other deserves more honour than he.

The name of this Church enshrines the memory of the large-hearted man whose witness to the faith and the evangelical gospel with his munificent gifts toward its proclamation should never be forgotten. It also writes on the face of the outlook in Glasgow the name of his son, a man of a like loyalty and of a rarely unselfish spirit. But this noble building fulfils a further purpose. It presents in enduring stone the realization of a long cherished purpose. It presents the symbol of a sacrifice that too few realize. Many ministers would have been slow to take any part in setting up a new congregation within the area of their own work and service. There were protests, and even open opposition from some of the congregations in the neighbourhood who feared that this new charge would limit the sphere of their appeal. Such a thought never entered into the mind of the founder of this congregation. He never passed by the Church door without an expression

of his delight in the form and fashion of the building. He never heard of its prosperity without a visible gratification. He never entered within its walls, or preached from its pulpit to which he was so gratefully welcomed and so devoutly appreciated, without a soft low word of thanksgiving to God in granting him this grace of beholding the consummation of the work of his years in the Gospel of Christ. It remains the full proof which he gave of his ministry. It represents, both in the beauty of its structure and the grace of its purpose, his mind and spirit. It is the enduring monument of Dr. George Reith—the expressive memorial of his ministry.

VIII: THE CHURCHMAN AND HIS LOYALTIES

THE name of Dr. George Reith had been held in honour throughout the Church for many years before he was given any distinctive place in its councils. As the minister of the most influential congregation in Glasgow he had long been regarded as a man of gifts and grace. Apart from his personal influence, his long ministry in the city had made him a sure interpreter of her civic ideals and a leader in her moral movements. On the occasion of the bestowal of public honour, or the death of some outstanding personality, his presence and word were welcomed, and his tributes were always fully reported. In those meetings at which some new cause for the amelioration of social conditions was inaugurated, or when visitors of high repute were received, or when the dead were mourned, his witness and eulogy were besought. To cite only one instance, his tribute to President Woodrow Wilson at his death, was often referred to as a model of a broad-minded appreciation, couched in noble, yet restrained

eloquence. In the Presbytery of Glasgow he was always regarded, as he entered it, with deep respect, and his presence was an inspiration to those members who carried the heavy burden of so large and so important a court of the Church.

He had also become known and respected beyond the bounds of his own Presbytery. At the meeting of the General Assembly at Inverness in 1888 he surprised many, to whom he had been only a name, by the spiritual passion of the sermon preached in the High Church, before the Assembly. Its subject was, most characteristically, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day and for ever." It was afterwards published by special request. The warm evangelic atmosphere of the Northern city was sympathetic to his intense devotion to Christ. His contributions to journals began to be sought, and his critiques on religion in art were accounted of high value. A similar recognition was not wanting in academic circles, and in 1892 the Degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him by the University of Aberdeen. In the public recognition of the event Dr. Ross Taylor declared, with a full concurrence, "It was an honour richly deserved, for Dr. Reith was one of the ablest, most thoughtful and most

cultured ministers of the Church." The scholarly authorities of his own Church were also realizing his mastery as a student of the scriptures, and in 1894 he was appointed to the Cunningham Lectureship. His friends were gladdened, and their letters expressed their sense of the wisdom of the appointment. Dr. Marcus Dods wrote to him appealing to him to deal with the message of the Gospel of John, urging that " no one can enter with such spiritual insight into the untrodden ground of the theology of John's gospel, as you are able to do." The proof of that statement has been engrossed in his two volumes of Exposition of the Gospel, and readers of its Introduction realize how accurately Dods had estimated his knowledge and insight.

He never sought any conspicuous place in the leadership of the Church, but he was becoming a marked man in its more important gatherings. He seldom took part in the deliberations on administration or finance, but he was always welcomed when he rose to express his mind on the more solemn issues of faith and doctrine. There were occasions on which his somewhat shy and always sensitive spirit shrank from the modes and methods of the executive agencies and he was averse to adopt the skilful

tactics of the debating arena. But he was moved at times to step forward with fearless courage. When any of his friends were slighted, or, as in the cases of Dr. Marcus Dods and Professor A. B. Bruce, when accusations of disloyalty to their vows were made, or when courses of procedure were proposed which seemed to him to be unjust or unworthy of a Christian Council, he was deeply stirred. On several of such occasions he arose and poured forth a fury of eloquence which transformed the whole aspect of the issue, quickened the consciences and convinced the minds of his hearers and compelled them to the decision for which he pleaded. As notable was the service he rendered when he was called upon to offer prayer in connection with some appointment or at some solemn moment of dedication. One who was a member of the Assembly describes the silence that fell upon every one as Dr. Reith led its members into a conscious sense of the presence of God. A Highland elder attending the Assembly for the first time, leaned forward at the conclusion of the prayer of intercession to ask of one seated before him "Who is that?" "Dr. George Reith of Glasgow," was the reply. There came the quiet comment, "He is a man of God."

Yet this minister of one of the most important congregations of the Church, with acknowledged gifts of thought and speech, was not called, in his due season, to the office of the Moderator. His gifts of address and his repute as a scholar had been recognized by the mention of his name by several Presbyteries for the Principalship of the Glasgow College. His fitness was often declared, and surprise was expressed at this neglect. It should be kept in mind that many forces are at work to determine the choices for this honourable position. Men with a capacity for business and a fluency of speech attract attention. Others find their way into the inner circle—"The Circumtabular Oligarchy" as it has been facetiously named in one Scottish communion. The method of election also, which relegates the choice to an aggregate meeting of the members of all the committees, is a decisive factor. In such a meeting the names of the men busy in the management of affairs are known and their services are accorded a high value. The result has been that few of the ministers of the Church whose names are held in repute as thinkers and preachers known and esteemed far beyond the Scottish border, have been chosen for this office, as compared with the number who have been ecclesiastics.

Dr. George Reith was not an ecclesiastic. He had neither the mind nor the temperament which fits a man for its many diverse offices, and for its pliancy of argument and action. He recognized most willingly the value of a wise, large-minded, and unselfish leadership in his unfaltering devotion to Dr. Rainy, and he made a strong protest against Professor Robertson Smith's keen-edged charge that "Rainy is a Jesuit." But he had no desire to seek the prominence, and to carry the burden inevitable to the conduct of the public life of the Church, and he was sometimes impatient of the need of dealing with petty affairs. Above all, he was not willing to play for safety—that ruling attitude of the master of assemblies. He could never consent to use the speech of the Church leader who is willing to steer a course through a narrow strait, and to avoid the Scylla of outspoken honesty on the one side, and the Charybdis of culpable deceit on the other. He would have answered the question of the Duke of Wellington, "How are we to carry on the Government?" with a decisive reply, "Not by any policy, or any plea, or any practice which is tinged with guile." He could never have been, apart from all moral imperatives, a Caiaphas, willing to crucify any man in his resolve

to secure the well-being of the Church, or a Gamaliel, shirking an honest examination into the truth of a prophetic word, or even a James, the Moderator of the First General Assembly, with his counsel to accept a compromise. He is to be classed rather with Peter, who was bold in the face of all authority, and with Paul who withstood " those who seemed to be somewhat " to the face, and with John who would have called down fire from heaven upon mean and bigoted Samaritans. Or, to cite the supreme example, he would have stood with Jesus when He cleansed the temple court with His scourge of cords, heedless of the accommodating priest and scribe. He was, as Guthrie said of himself, with his engaging humour, " An outside passenger of the coach," and, like Guthrie, the one other Disruption minister with Chalmers, whom succeeding generations have honoured by placing his statue on the noble esplanade of Princes Street in Edinburgh, he was a loyal Churchman in love and service.

Never was any man more loyal to the ideals and the testimony of the history of his Church. Neither his words nor his deeds, nor at times his protests and decisions can be understood unless this abiding passion is realized. He was humble in bearing, unassertive in speech, and

most courteous under all provocation in regard to offences toward himself. He was always willing to sit down in the lowest room. At times he indulges in what seems to be a strange self-depreciation. Those who knew him well marked his grace in taking slights from the self-important with a silent self-restraint. But let any man use glozing speech, equivocate with truth, present a tricky argument, or more emphatically still, let any man, or company of men, conceive a plan of action which was crafty, fair-seeming, but not clean to the core, not loyal to the highest interests, and at once there fell upon him that stillness which was sometimes the precursor of a storm. And, above all, any course of conduct, which was inimical to the well-being of the Church, aroused the whole inner man in clear protest. A personal slight he could accept with meekness. Any smirching of the fair name of the Church aroused his open indignation. Along the whole course of his life this feature was evident, and this characteristic of his character made him to be the more revered by those who had the privilege of his friendship.

An instance may be noted in his attitude toward the failure of a Glasgow Bank in 1878. Those who knew the whole story had much

compassion for its managers beset by a keen temptation. Those who were aware of the wide area of suffering, and the impoverishment of simple and often dependent people, were moved as Dr. Walter C. Smith was moved in his tender lament.[1] No one was more shadowed in spirit than Dr. Reith, and no one more instant in his appeals for help. But he added his clear voice to the noble protest, made by Dr. Rainy, against a public lottery, as a means of raising a large fund for the help of those poor men and women, who had been so suddenly brought to poverty. Yet, when he realized that so many of the directors were members of the Church of his devotion, his voice was clear in reproach. It is on record that he addressed the young men of the Woodside Mission on the Sunday morning after the disclosures were made. He spoke on the words, "Who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us." The fifty young men, who had gathered together, listened in wonder and silence to this strange and eager pleading that no one of them would be seduced, from seeking the good of the light of God's countenance, for any worldly gain

[1] "The Cry of the Maiden Shareholders." First published in the *Scotsman* newspaper.

or exalted place among men. The intensity of the passion amazed all who heard, and it was not until afterwards, as they recalled some of his unforgettable sentences, that they realized how he had been cut to the quick by the disloyalty of those, who had broken the vows they had made to the Church of the Lord.

Another incident of his public life may be touched on, all the more that he felt keenly the criticism that was passed upon his action. When Dr. Denney, the Principal of the Glasgow College, died, Dr. Reith, seconded by Sir Andrew Fraser, proposed Professor Clow as his successor. There were a number to whom the name was not acceptable. In order to defeat the motion they proposed Dr. Archibald Henderson, the foremost personality of the Church, and the revered and beloved leader of the Assembly. His consent was difficult to secure. His age, his limited physical fitness, and his want of connection with any academic service, caused him to falter in his consent. Those who were urging his name relied upon the high regard of the Church for him, and still more, on the unwillingness of many to vote against him. Dr. Reith, it is said, winced visibly when he heard of their action, and he

found great difficulty in speaking with a due restraint. He was vexed most of all by the report of a vulgar slogan upon the lips of the chief mover in the plan. Dr. Henderson was elected by a majority. But when Dr. Reith was asked to consent to the usual custom and to make the choice unanimous—an action pressed because it was said that Dr. Henderson would refuse without that mark of confidence —he declined. A number of correspondents, who wrote commending his action in proposing Professor Clow were critical of his refusal to follow the usual etiquette. To his most beloved intimate he wrote :

" My motion was defeated by a small majority. The United Presbyterians and the old Free Church party, hostile to Clow, united in running Dr. Henderson as their only chance of success : and they carried him by harping on the honour due to him, whereas it was the dishonour they wanted to do the other that animated the party. In the evening, I am told, they hawked a petition round, asking signatures to influence Dr. Henderson. It was a got-up job. To think of a man of 82 years of age so imposed on the College, living sixty miles away from it, is not very composing to one's mind. How-

ever, these things will occur, and we must make the best of them."

The absence of all personal feeling, the refusal to even argue the case, and the assurance that the simple statement of the facts will be convincing, together with the quiet remark at the end, all witness to the ruling trait in a man of tender spirit who was loyal, at all costs, to the interests of the Church and her work—but one who never paid undeserved courtesies to any personality.

This ruling feature of his character, with its deeply-felt revulsion against any disloyalty to truth or to honour, was manifest to all who knew him, and won him many tributes from those who hailed his high courage. His speech at times reminded some of that Moses, "who was *disinterested* above all men that are on the face of the earth," when he broke the tables of the law, as he became aware that the children of Israel were dancing round the golden calf, in their disloyalty to the God of Israel. He was willing to be called impulsive, and even impracticable, in regard to any course of conduct which stained the fair name of his Church. As was said of him on one occasion, he was a man with "an apostolic sense of grace, and a prophetic sense of righteousness."

REV. GEORGE REITH, D.D.,
Moderator of the Church.

This nobility of motive and this fearlessness of protest appear at all the decisive issues of his public life. In every one of those historic "heresy hunts," he was a stalwart apologist of the accused. His personal affection for Dr. Marcus Dods and for Professor A. B. Bruce drew him into the front line of their defence. His championship of Professor Robertson Smith was more expressed and unfaltering than some thought it required to be. In this case Dr. Rainy's attitude and policy vexed him deeply. He held, as few if any of his defenders now deny, that Dr. Rainy was too much concerned with the peace and unity of the Church, and too little intent upon the cause of truth. Wherever the true well-being of the Church was sought, at the cost of paltering with the proved results of scholarship, or ignoring the fuller knowledge of the scripture, whatever that might imply, Dr. Reith had no hesitation in taking the stand of the protestor. In the closing words of his defence of Professor Robertson Smith, he discloses, with balanced expression, his whole inner mind.

"The proposal either to libel and to condemn Professor Robertson Smith, or to remove him from his chair, is a very shortsighted and self-destructive policy. You may declare, explicitly, or implicitly, that a man shall not hold these

views, and be an office-bearer or a Professor. But, if men arrive by honest study at these results, as they are doing more and more every day, what are you to do? Do you think that our Professors will stop all reverent inquiry? You may depose Professor Robertson Smith, but you cannot shake the evidence for the truth of his views, as these have become lodged in the minds of men who study the question. The Church that does not tolerate and welcome them will speedily sink into a second-rate, narrow community. We desire our beloved Church to be the Church of all at present included, by God's blessing, within her fold—men of evangelistic gifts, men of ecclesiastical capacities, men of scholarship. Our Church has been honoured of God to be a pioneer in many ways—in the assertion of specific rights, in the bearing of one another's burdens, in the support of the ministry and in the rich Theological literature that has issued from her studies. She has been honoured to give birth to a scholar, whose reputation will add, and has already added, to her own justly merited good name. Are you to cast off this fruitful branch, and do your utmost to refuse inquiry within our borders, and so to deter those from entering your communion who eagerly desire that in your Church—free, spiritual, evangelical,—they should have the congenial sphere for the exercise of their gifts? Yet, meanwhile, I am more concerned for my Church than for Professor Robertson Smith, much as I esteem him and love him. It is not to clear him of this charge, so much as to vindicate for the Church of my Lord the right of being the leader of reverent thought on the Bible and its message. I am jealous for her, that while believing and maintaining the old faith, she may prove not only unafraid of fresh light, but be also the source, through her sons—men of gifts and character—of enriching blessing to the world. I esteem and I honour my friend, but I esteem and I honour my Church much more. I am jealous for her right to be

regarded as the representative Church of the land, holding with a firm hand, the truth which is her hereditary privilege and her sacred possession—even her divine trust—while she allows her official teachers the liberty which the fearless love of truth demands, and to have it ever freshened so as to be a living guide and not a dead thing of the past."

It will not be surprising to those, who are acquainted with Church courts, that not until 1914, when he was 72 years of age, was this Churchman, with his loyalties to his communion and its faith, chosen as the Moderator of its General Assembly. Yet it may be better, at least for those to whom a good name is more to be desired than precious ointment, that men should wonder why an honour has not been conferred, than they should ask questions as to the reason of its bestowal.

The distinction with which Dr. Reith fulfilled his Moderatorship justified the forecast of his intimates. The writers of the various accounts of the Assembly Proceedings, both in the *Church Record* and in the public Press, all dwell upon the power of his addresses, and all add an emphatic note on the fascination of his personality. Dr. J. R. P. Sclater, who contributed *An Impression of the Opening Day*, drew a most apt pen-portrait of him.

"In Dr. Reith we have the beau-ideal representative of the cultured minister. His dignity of mien, the simplicity

and vividness of his language, and, if one may be permitted to say so, the peculiar quality of his voice, all heighten the impression. I do not know if any others felt the same, but every now and then, in little turns of the head, but especially in unexpected tones of the voice, I was strongly reminded of another whose memory is dear to us, and who also might have represented Scottish culture—I mean Principal Dykes. And, in addition, there was evidence and to spare in our Moderator's address, that the ancient passion and fire of Scotland for right dealing, and for the Kingdom of God, are not spent yet. It was most inspiring to see our venerable chief, his natural force unabated, rousing himself and his Church to 'one fight more, the best and the last.' None of us could fail to be the more hopeful of the coming of a better day, when enthusiasm so infectious and courage so high were made manifest in the chief place of the Church. And Dr. Reith left us in no doubt of the peculiar contribution which the Church—and the Church alone—under its Master, can give to the development of the community of which men dream. 'The essence of the Social Problem, he affirmed is the soul.'"

This impression of the opening ceremony was deepened as the days of the Assembly passed on, and all the courtesies, required of a presiding chairman, were fulfilled with a rare and marked grace.

In the account given in the *Church Record* the editor, Mr. W. P. Livingstone, remarks on

"the peculiarly tender and gracious way in which the Moderator addressed those who were presented to him, or gave in their reports. Especially remarkable were his

addresses on the Children's Day, and his counsels to those carrying on the difficult Home Mission work in the large cities and in the industrial districts. His closing words to the outgoing missionaries were especially moving. 'In a peculiarly tender and gracious way the Moderator addressed the missionaries, speaking of the joy and difficulties of the work, and advising them not to let the enthusiasm of the occasion pass away like a forgotten dream, but to carry it with them and always to trust Christ. In the closing prayer led by the Rev. J. Fairley Daly, so long convener of the Foreign Mission Committee, and in the hymn which concluded the memorable gathering, the deepened convictions of the crowded Assembly Hall were expressed.'"

In his "Comment" the Editor remarks on "the sense of brotherliness and the note of buoyancy and of courage, which ran through all the proceedings," and he adds:

"Perhaps something was due to the radiant personality of the Moderator. Despite the cleavage of opinion regarding his opening address on social problems, Dr. Reith won the affection of the entire Assembly. His fine presence and thoughtful face, his charming courtesy, his little speeches, and his prayers so instinct with spiritual fervour and grace, seemed unconsciously to affect the Assembly, and to impart a softer edge to the conflict of intellectual view, and a warmer glow to the grey business atmosphere."

It is the custom for the Moderator of the Assembly to spend some part of the summer, following its meeting, in May, in visiting the congregations of a few of the outlying provinces, or among those of the more populous Scottish

counties. To Dr. Reith it was given to go on pilgrimage to the Outer Isles of the Hebrides. Accompanied by Dr. Alexander Lee, the Secretary of the Highland Committee of the Church, as guide and interpreter, by Mr. W. P. Livingstone, the Editor of the *Record*, and by his own son, the Rev. G. Douglas Reith, he visited the Western Isles of Lewis and Harris, North Uist, Borera and Bernera, Skye, and the far-out Atlantic-swept St. Kilda. The account given of this Columba-like tour is touched both with romance and pathos. The estimate of its value to these so distant people, and to the Church as a whole, when their faith as well as their need were chronicled, cannot be overdrawn. From the hour when Dr. Reith, at his first address, expressed his regret that the gift of "the Gaelic" his grandmother possessed had not been inherited, to his last words to the company of islanders who accompanied him to the ship to bid him an affectionate and reverent farewell, he was regarded, as he was rightly discerned to be, an apostle of Christ. His benedictions fell not only on bowed heads, but on uplifted hearts. When he spoke, whether in the well-adorned Churches of the larger towns, or in the simple and often barely equipped houses of prayer, which had become holy places

through the conscious sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit, or to some aged, bed-ridden believer, in some "lone shieling of the misty island," the warm-hearted folk responded with their assurance that God had visited His people. "It is a red-letter day for St. Kilda" was the utterance of one grateful spirit. A similar gratitude was expressed wherever his voice was heard, and his benediction was given.

Dr. Reith came back to commend the loyalty of these isolated members of the Church, to describe his pilgrimage in vivid appreciation, and to enlist a deeper sympathy for their need. He raised a sum of £3,000 to renew and repair their storm-swept Churches and their too often barely furnished manses. And he testified, with characteristic grace, that the blessing he had received was greater than that he had been the means of giving to these devout men and women of the far-off Hebrides.

IX: THE CLOSING YEARS

"WHEN thou shalt be old" is a sentence which falls upon a young man's ear to be quickly forgotten. As the decades pass it recurs with a more arresting suggestiveness, and compels him to lift his eyes to a still far-off horizon. But the time comes when this word of the Master re-echoes within him. To face the coming years with a calm which is not merely a self-willed resolve, but is a courage born of faith, is a part of the triumph of life. That truth has been given its witness nowhere more clearly than in the vocation of the Christian ministry. There are callings in which old age is a haunting shadow cast by the fear of poverty, loneliness and neglect, uncared for by others. There are occupations in which an assured knowledge, a wide experience, and even a past service, are given a slight regard in competition with a stronger stroke and a swifter stride. But in the calling of the Christian minister, while the vicissitudes of life must be endured, its closing years are often richer in blessing than those of its fair beginning. The natural strength

is lessened. The intellectual force declines. The dynamic in word and deed is less potent. Even the judgment, although not the power of prescience, may be less discerning. But the influence of the minister's personality remains. His friendships, despite the passing of many who once kept step with him, prevent his loneliness. His assurance of the eternal realities becomes more steadfast, and thereby his conception of the values of life, and his consequent bearing toward both its sorrow and its joy, become wiser and more steadfast. And yet this must not be forgotten; there comes, in almost universal experience, a time of severe trial, which is a strait gate and a narrow way, and yet leads him further into the beatitudes of the kingdom of God.

That experience may be seen, set in a vivid light, in the closing years of the ministry of Dr. George Reith. As the century closed his name and his gifts had been acclaimed. His message was recognized as one of spiritual power. His insight into the Gospel, and above all into the mystery of the Redeemer, together with its meaning for the lives of men, had been realized. His standing, both in the community at large and in the counsels of the Church, was secure. The proofs of his ministry were before men's eyes,

and his personality, marked both in its force and its grace, was an influence in every company he entered. He was rich in friends, especially in the congregation whose devotion was always as tender to him as his own affection was tense and sensitive toward them. He had passed through his own hours of sorrow as all men do. In a world so conditioned by laws of nature, with flesh so liable to pain, and spirit so often strained by toil and anxiety, no man escapes the passage of God's great *tribulum* over the field of his life. But his faith had given him a notable calm through them all. No man ever declared more steadfastly, both in his conversation and his letters, his absolute confidence in the power and the wisdom of God. When this century dawned he may well have looked forward to the years that remained with a sure hope of their presenting a pilgrim path of peace.

Suddenly the storm burst upon his life. It was as unexpected as it was overwhelming. The Latin poet Horace describes the sense of awe which the ancients felt when they heard thunder resounding in a cloudless sky. All who knew the history of the College Church shortly after the century opened were held in a mood of questioning amazement. On the afternoon of 29th May 1903 a fire broke out within the

stately building of the College Church, and in an hour the whole interior was destroyed. Only the high walls and the two lofty towers stood above the smoking ruins. That House of God in which he had begun his ministry thirty-seven years before, the only Church in which he had served, within whose silences he had prayed and proclaimed his message, the very temple of his sacrifice, whose very dust was dear, was a ruin. It needs no presentation by the imagination to realize the anguish of such an experience. One who stood beside him, watching, while both kept an absolute silence, the fierce upleap of the flames, marked, with a glance aside, the spasm of pain upon his face as the roof fell in. Then, as the flames ceased and the smoke of the sodden ruins began to rise, there came a tense grasp of the hand and the words, "Thank you for standing with me; this is a dark sorrow—God give me light and strength to find my way." He crossed the road with a swift step, and passed with a bowed head into the manse.

This strange calamity called forth a flood of messages in which men and women of all communions, in Glasgow and throughout Scotland, expressed their sorrow for him and the congregation in this day of desolation. He might well have been surprised, as he often expressed

himself to be, at the witness to the place he had attained in the regard of his fellow ministers throughout Scotland. He had not realized how many, to whom he thought himself almost unknown, had kept him and his service in high esteem. Many, who confessed that they found it difficult to express their sympathy, found it to be abundantly easy to set down their reverence for his worth and work. His congregation almost forgot their own loss, and the outcasting from their cherished sanctuary, in conveying their sense of his impoverishment. This tender regard they marked by the gathering of a munificent gift, which was presented to him, with warm expressions both of gratitude and of the continuance of their loyalty.

There followed upon this desolating and outcasting loss five difficult years, shadowed by uncertainty, in which, to use his own words of foresight, he had to "find his way." At first the congregation met for worship within the large hall of the adjoining College. The members rallied in full numbers, so that they were compelled to seek a place of worship more adequate to their need. The Queen's Rooms, not far distant, provided them with ampler accommodation. For eighteen months their public worship, and the meetings of their

agencies, were carried on with a devotion which Dr. Reith often commended to others. But the hindrances both to worship and to service were keenly felt. Then the office-bearers of Kelvingrove Church, in the same district of the city, offered to adapt their hours of worship so as to meet the necessities of the College Church and of their own congregation. For three years this courtesy continued, and it had its own due effect.

When the College Church people faced the question of providing for the future four proposals were mooted. The first was the suggestion to restore the College Church, and to take the opportunity of making the interior more fitting, as well as more beautiful, for public worship. A plan of this restored interior was shown which attracted many who were eager to maintain their hallowed associations with the building for nearly fifty years. But the authorities of the adjoining College had been considering some extension of their buildings to provide a larger library and more classrooms. They made a liberal offer for the site and its remaining walls. That induced a second proposal to erect a new Church a short distance away, and this so caught the minds of the people that the ground was purchased. But a

third project, based upon the feeling that the district was over-churched, had been outlined, to remove farther west, and to build a new Church in the Hyndland Road. There was evident room and need for such a congregation. The fourth proposal was to unite with some other neighbouring Church. This became attractive when there was presented an invitation from Kelvingrove congregation, with whom their common worship had created a natural sympathy, to unite the two congregations under the name of The College and Kelvingrove Church.

These various proposals were met with some divergence of opinion. The first two were discarded, and the site, which had been bought, was sold. A more distinctive, but always courteous, difference of opinion emerged as to the other two. Dr. Reith held from the first that the congregation should not migrate at all, and that a removal so far west as to this Hyndland suburb should not be considered seriously. That pronouncement carried great weight with the people, although many agreed that the district round about the College Church had already too many similar congregations, and that the new field was a signal opportunity for a ministry such as Dr. Reith would fulfil. Some of these members had a life-long connection

with the Church, and they were animated by a sincere desire of securing a field of service worthy of their beloved minister and his spiritual fervour. The issue between the two proposals became urgent, and Dr. Reith felt that the time had come when he must express his mind clearly. He wrote :

"*1st November* 1907.

"We have come to a critical stage in the history of our congregation, since, if the congregational meeting about to be summoned for the 51th day of this month, confirms, by vote, the views of the majority of the office-bearers, as these have been expressed on various occasions, and resolves to remove to the Hyndland district, no course will be left open to me, but to retire from the ministry of the congregation.

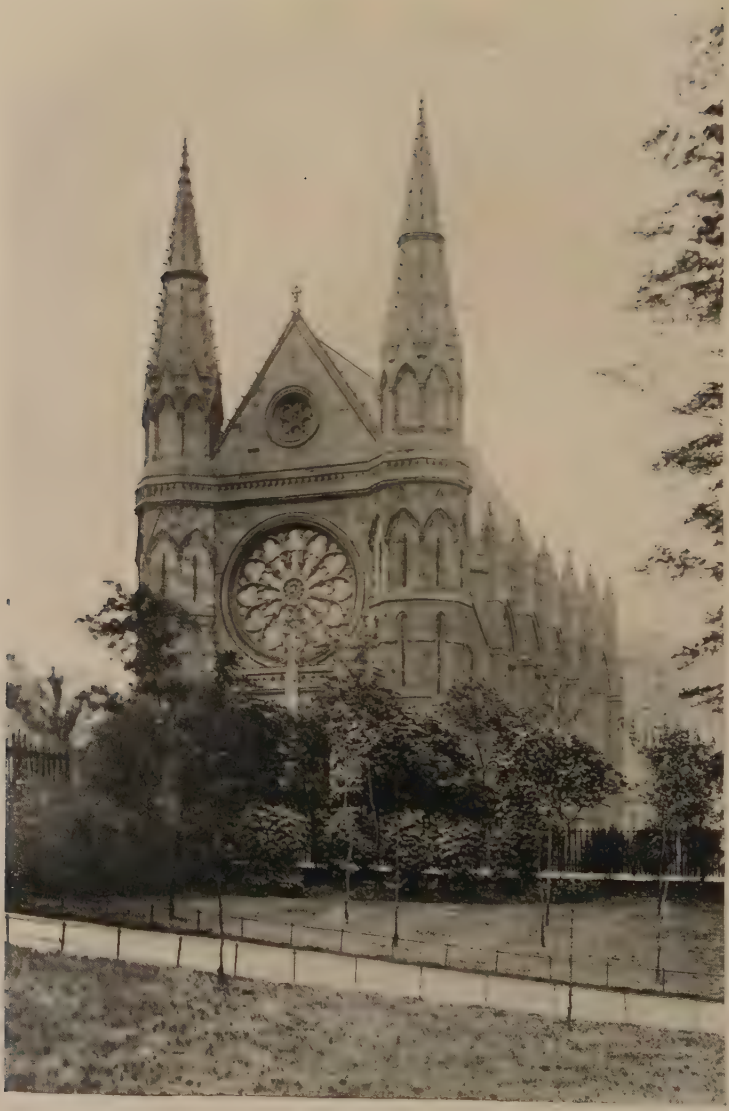
"My main reason for this step is the fact that the congregation will be hopelessly shattered by such a removal. The long distance makes it practically impossible for a very large proportion of the families, even if they agree to go, to continue in any but a merely nominal membership. I believed, and I still believe, that reconstruction was the wise plan to have adopted at first. Reconstruction being set aside, I believe that union with Kelvingrove congre-

gation would conserve the great bulk of our people, and it has several strong arguments besides that one, to support it.

"With a deep sense of my own shortcomings during a ministry of forty-one years in this charge, craving pardon from Him, Who alone knows the heart, and while feeling profoundly humilated before God that such division should have taken place among brethren, I am willing to bear my share of blame for that division. Nevertheless, I desire to place on record my firm persuasion that I have followed the only course approved of by my judgment."

Against this protest few, if any, were willing to proceed further with the project of removing to the western suburb. But some were disappointed, and did not feel so confident that union with Kelvingrove was advisable, and they intimated that they would not retain their membership if that union were to be consummated.

After a short period of pause and reflection, when the natural tension of feeling had relaxed, the general conclusion was reached that Dr. Reith had outlined the only possible future, and had rightly chosen his own path. The reason on which he had laid stress would not now be easily dismissed. But there lay behind



COLLEGE AND KELVINGROVE CHURCH.

his decision a fact at which he only hints. To ask a man of 65 years of age, even although supported by eager friends, to undertake what would have been in reality the ingathering and upbuilding of a new congregation was to make a demand such as could not be fulfilled. The requisite visitation of a new membership, the organization of the various agencies, not to speak of the sustaining of the congregational life during the year and a half required for the building of the new Church, demanded a strength and an elasticity such as no man of his years could be expected to possess. Beyond these evident necessities, his past experience, and the methods of his ministry did not fit him for such a task. As he once said, speaking very gently, "If the congregation moves westward, it must be with a younger and a different minister, and he must have a free hand."

At a meeting of the congregation held in November 1907 Dr. Reith's counsel was accepted, and it was resolved to unite with the congregation of Kelvingrove. The joint worship of the past three years made this union easy, for it was the approved recognition of their fellowship. The immediate result was a most acceptable harmony. The union had many additional reasons to commend it. The

handsome Gothic building satisfied the ideal of a place of worship held by the members of the College Church. Its situation gave assurance that the greater number of them would continue their membership. It was within easy distance of their mission in North Woodside. The purchase money for their old site, and that accruing from the insurance upon their Church, enabled the joint congregation to liquidate the heavy debt which burdened Kelvingrove congregation. An additional inducement was that it was possible to make a generous allowance to the retiring minister of Kelvingrove Church, the Rev. Peter Rutherford, and leave the congregation free to provide an adequate stipend for both a senior and a junior colleague. One singular circumstance sealed the happy community of feeling. The College Church looked back, as we have seen, to the old Tron Kirk as its ecclesiastical ancestor.[1] The Kelvingrove Church traced its lineage back to the old Wynd Church, situated in a narrow lane almost at the back of the Tron Kirk and Steeple. One of the early migrations from that unfailing spring of evangelical fervour founded a congregation at Little Dovehill. Kelvingrove was this same congregation, in direct descent, re-

[1] Cf. Chap. V., p. 88.

moved and re-named to the west end of the city.[1] It was in the Wynd Church that Dr. Reith began his ministry as the young evangelist.[2] Now he spoke to those who were the heirs of both of these old-time Glasgow congregations.

The union was formally consummated on 1st October 1908. That day marked the passing of those five years of darkness, with their strain and anxiety, through which Dr. Reith and his loyal people had to find their way. The years that followed were rich in all the felicities of the Christian life. The ties that bind Christian men and women to each other became strong and tender. The spacious Church was well filled by a devout congregation, and its evangelical zeal was manifested in the quickened interest both in the work of the Church at home and abroad, and in the agencies of the North Woodside Mission. One of the visible results of the union, especially gratifying to Dr. Reith, was the reconstruction of the apse of the Church. The pulpit was brought forward and placed at the right hand, and the seats for the choir were placed so as to provide a better accommodation and to leave room for the more orderly and

[1] Cf. *History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church*, 1733–1900, pp. 32–5.

[2] Chap. V., p. 90.

reverent observance of the Lord's Supper. A new organ, chastely encased, was built. A bannerette, worked by Mrs. Peters, a handsome oak Communion Table, given by Mr. William N. Simpson, and a chastely designed brass Lectern, the gift of Dr. Reith's youngest son, added to the beauty of the aspect. The inscription on the Lectern was a suggestive tribute to the ministry of Dr. Reith.

"Qui Multos ad
Justitiam Erudiunt Quasi
Stellae in Aeternitates
Perpetuas Fulgebunt."—

("They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.") [1]

With the ever deepening regard of his people, Dr. Reith passed on to the tranquil close of his ministry. To undertake the oversight of the agencies and to fulfil the exacting obligations of the pastorate and to share in the work of the pulpit the Rev. A. Herbert Gray, M.A. (now Dr. Herbert

[1] It was a strange and shadowing coincidence, with even more fateful issues to the congregation, that on 10th July 1925 this finely adorned place of prayer was also destroyed by fire. But the story of that calamity does not belong to this record. The memorials that now remain are the alms dishes presented to Dunblane Cathedral, and similar gifts in Regent Square Church, London; the Congregational Church, Lynton, N. Devon; the Parish Church of Kingston-Buci, Sussex; and Newlands Church, Glasgow.

Gray, of Crouch Hill, London), was called in 1909 from Manchester. For five years this fellowship in service continued with all due loyalty. But Mr. Gray was deeply interested in the social and religious condition of the people, and he accepted a call to White Memorial Church in the midst of a massed population on the south side of the Clyde. The Rev. G. A. Frank Knight, M.A. (now Dr. Knight, so well known as the scholarly Secretary of the Scottish National Bible Society), came, in 1914, from St. Leonard's Church in Perth, to continue the joint pastorate. By his lineage, his ideal of ministry, his experience, and his considerateness he fulfilled the hopes the people cherished, and the congregation rejoiced in the complete accord of the older and younger ministers in their service.

Then came the event, which, as Dr. Reith said to an intimate friend, marked the hour in which God's whisper was heard through all the voices of men calling upon him to rest. This was the celebration of the jubilee of his ministry. Its public commemoration began on Sunday, 29th October, when he conducted the closing service of his fifty years of ministry. He chose his subject, most characteristically, from the Gospel of John, basing his message on the call of Jesus to the first inquirers who sought him,

"Come and see" (St. John i. 39). It was the keynote of the entreating appeals by which he had so often proved himself to be an apostle of Christ. At its close he touched the hearts and consciences of the people in this witness.

"Ministers are not ordained to impose their authority on their hearers, or dictate the terms of their faith or the articles of their creed, or set forth their opinions as final; simply to bear their own personal witness to the power of Christ to save from sin and sanctify, and entreat their fellow-men to deal with Christ for themselves. 'We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.' That is at once the privilege, the glory, and the responsibility of the ministry. And in this, the closing service of my fifty years' ministry, with all its many defects which I recognize far more clearly than my severest critic can do, I think I can claim with humility that to exalt Christ, and bring honour to Him in the hearts and lives of my hearers, has been my continuous aim, however grievously I have fallen short of it. I can only hope that no imperfection of mine in setting Christ forth as Saviour has failed to convince any one of his need of Christ's salvation, or to lessen his sense of the need of it, or of the glory and wonder of it;

or so to impair or dim the attractiveness of the Saviour Himself as to repress or chill any inquiring spirit. The past is past. The future is still in God's hands, and not in our power as yet to make or mar. Now is the day of salvation. . . .

"So I desire to close this record of half a century's preaching by once more urgently, yet tenderly, bidding you 'Come and see.' By the mercies of God, by the agonies of His Son, by the gracious workings of the Spirit, by hopes of Heaven, by the terrors of the Lord, I do beseech you to make Christ your own. My powers of persuasion may be feeble; you may detect many a fault in my presentation to you of the Great and Good Shepherd who saves the lost; I may fall infinitely short of the grandeur and the glory of this wonder of God's Son laying His life down for sinners, and pleading with them to come and find a place never to be lost in His heart: my voice may be only that of Philip to Nathanael, and not like that of Christ Himself to John and Andrew: yet even so, it is not the messenger you have to think of, but his message; a message to you if you will but receive it. Come and welcome to Jesus Christ; come and see Him with your own eye in His fulness of grace and truth. Come and hear Him speak, and speak to you

—' I have loved thee with an everlasting love, and with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.' "

On Saturday 4th November 1916, fifty years, to a day, from the date of his induction, a great company gathered in the hall of the College to do him honour. Mr. Knight presided, and as representing the congregation, the Rev. Principal Denney and Rev. J. Fairley Daly, with Messrs. Fergus Smith, J. Parlane Young, M. Pearce Campbell, J. H. Robertson, John G. Keith and David Gillies. Letters of congratulation, not only from friends of his youth and from his brethren in the ministry, but from great numbers of all the Christian communions at home and abroad, were intimated. Addresses were presented from the Presbytery of Glasgow, and from Stevenson Memorial Church. Dr. Whyte, as his oldest college friend, recalled the educative and ennobling influence of Dr. Reith upon his fellow-students, as upon all admitted to his friendship. Then Principal Denney made the presentation of his portrait, painted by Mr. Allan Sutherland, Aberdeen, and along with it he handed a gift of a sum of money. It was noted that Dr. Reith's face seemed to indicate that memory was busy with the past, while presenting a tense interest in the events of the hour. But when Miss Kathleen Knight brought an offering, on behalf of the children of

the congregation, the light shone out with evident pleasure. Gifts to Mrs. Reith were presented by Mrs. Fairley Daly and Mrs. W. A. Campbell, and a second bouquet, brought to the platform by Miss Isabel Gunn, daughter of Mr. Richard Gunn, superintendent of the Sabbath School, expressed the mind of its teachers and scholars.

In presenting the gifts Principal Denney said that he was proud to be the mouthpiece of the congregation, and of the large circle outside who desired to do honour to Dr. Reith. No one had ever occupied the Moderator's chair with more distinction. The whole Church joined in the celebration of that afternoon. Dr. Reith had been a distinguished embodiment of New Testament religion. He had stood for a religion that was at once evangelical, and as broad as all the interests of man's life. Some people thought that Dr. Reith was a radical, but he believed him to be an aristocrat to the core, and at the same time an advocate of righteousness and justice for all. As Burke said in his panegyric on Fox, his faults had nothing in them to extinguish the fire of great virtues. He did not know any character better able than Dr. Reith's to sustain the inevitable discount of human infirmity that every human being had to bear. Their heart's desire was that God

would be with him in the future as he had been in the past, and that he might continue to have honour and love and troops of friends.

In his reply Dr. Reith said, speaking with evident modesty, that he was afraid that his friends had put his merits under the microscope of personal friendship. He was overwhelmed with gratitude to the members of the Church and the other friends who had united in the celebration. Looking back over the fifty years he found a great deal to make him humble in the divergence between his earlier aims and his actual accomplishments. Many a time he had been tempted to resign it all, but he was prevented by feeling what he owed to the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the affection of the people which had grown around him. He had somehow gained the love of the congregation early in his ministry, and he thought that he had never lost it. It was a rare privilege to have been allowed to preach the Gospel for fifty years, for one, who faithfully proclaimed the Gospel in Glasgow, was doing more to foster its true prosperity than any master of industry.

After this presentation Professor Cooper spoke for the University of Glasgow. Principal Sir George Adam Smith, of Aberdeen, the Moderator of the United Free Church, expressed

the gratitude, esteem and affection of the whole Church, and conveyed the express congratulations from Dr. Reith's Alma Mater, the University of Aberdeen. He bore witness to the dignity and power and tact with which he discharged the duties of the Moderator of the Church, and recalled the impression made upon himself when he received from Dr. Reith the charge on his induction as a Professor in the Glasgow College.

After Dr. Wells had spoken of the days of service in the Wynd Church, Mr. James Muirhead, who had been present when Dr. Reith preached for the first time in the College Church, in 1866, Mr. Fergus Smith, the session clerk, and Mr. Pearce Campbell, representing the historic families of the congregation, added their grateful tributes to the minister they loved so well.

On the Sunday following special services were held when Principal Denney preached in the forenoon on the words, "I magnify mine office" (Romans xi. 13), and Mr. Knight in the afternoon on the text, "I have preached righteousness in the great congregation" (Psalm xl. 9–10). The one common note was that eagerly emphasized fidelity, both in truth and love, with which Dr. Reith had borne witness to Christ, and so had touched men's consciences to higher ideals and led them into a loyal service to their Lord.

X: THE SUNSET HOUR

FOR two years after the celebration of his jubilee Dr. Reith continued his ministry to a people even more reverent in their regard and more devoted to him than before. They realized, as was remarked, that there is a glow of spiritual emotion on the face of the old which may be more impressive than the flush of the surge of feeling in a young man's heart. His last sermon was delivered on a lovely Sunday morning in the month of September 1918. Then there followed a year, and rather more, of patient waiting for the end, by one whose eyes had seen the salvation of the Lord. Faber finely says, in his *Spiritual Conferences*, "Men's faces looking into the sunset are golden." So in this last year, the eventide of his life, as he lay, always calm, and sometimes with a radiant confidence that his times were in God's hands, there was seen, by those admitted to his inner chamber, the sheen of his rest in God. He was often troubled by his sense of weakness although not visited by pain. But because of his perfect submission this period left on him only the beautiful. If some

who scorn the great *dogmata* of the Christian faith, and reject its ideal of life and its sources of strength, could have waited in his room, they would have marked the courage and the confidence of his faith, and they would have passed out with a new questioning of their denials. Only such a day of life has such a sunset hour.

His eager spirit, although compassed about by bodily infirmities, maintained its interest in the whole round of life.

He had always loved children, "the dear young people" as he called them, and they made, with that well-known instinctive understanding, an instant response to him. In their games, in the passing cares of their days, in the wistful wonder of their more serious hours, and in the tasks they faced as childhood passed into youth, he was, as occasion required, both companion and counsellor. They recognized the eager glance of his eyes, and quickened light upon his face, as they entered his presence, to be the symbols of an open door to his affection and desire. He remembered their names. He kept in touch with their growing intelligence. His interest deepened, and his tone grew more tender as childhood passed into youth, and they faced the transforming changes in their lives. There are men and women,

now playing a large part on the stage of life, who recall, with a deeper understanding, and a warmth of tender feeling, his many kindnesses to them in their childhood.

He manifested as characteristic, but, of course, a deeper, regard for the friends and fellow-workers of older years. To them he displayed those humanities and that appreciative understanding of the breadth of the real interests of life, of which some who knew him only in public life were not fully aware. These intimates knew of his gift of recital as he told the stories whose point and humour had caught his fancy. They were sometimes reminiscences of his early years, or presentations of Scottish life and character, and, as frequently, illustrations of the meaning of past episodes, and of traits in the character of the personalities he had met in his ministry. When his retentive memory selected a quaint or humorous incident, or an apt and illuminating repartee, or a happy characterization, it was told with a point and grace which gave it charm—yet never with a sting. Never did he transgress, as some have done, to recall any word or deed of shame or mockery. His own sensitive spirit had only protest, as all his friends knew, both for words and deeds of dishonour—and

for the recording of them. But to a trusted visitor by his fireside, or in a company of his intimates, wit and humour were given full play.

His deepest and most commanding interest focussed on the well-being of those whom he had served. His enduring affection craved for the continuance of his fellowship with them. His life-long devotion to the Gospel moved him to send tender greetings to them. His letters to those who were dear to him are many, but they lead the reader into the inner room, which few should enter. The responses made by his correspondents disclose the peculiar hold he kept on those who knew him, and these were all treasured by him. Two of these letters may be selected, one from each of his colleagues, to indicate this regard. The first, from Mr. Knight, belongs to the year after the celebration of his jubilee.

"FERNFIELD, CRINAN, BY LOCHGILPHEAD.

"Here we are, safely ensconced in our summer quarters. All went well with us on our journey. It is a lovely locality and everything is beautiful.

"But I write to thank you for that most kind letter you sent me yesterday. It touched me very much. I would like to thank you for all the kindness and help and stimulus and guidance

you have given me in these past two years. They have indeed been years full of happy association with you in the work of the ministry. I wish I could have helped you more in these years, and been more of a true assistant to you. But in all you allowed me to do you knew you were being assisted by one who looked up to you with admiration and love, and that in an increasing measure. It is an inspiration to a young man like myself to labour alongside of one so rich in spiritual experience and power, and I earnestly pray God to spare you in life that I may have this privilege prolonged, and that you may have the joy of continuing with your people—who love you so much—especially in this your jubilee year."

Dr. Herbert Gray also wrote, in the last year, when the shadows of the evening had begun to fall.

"THE HAYES, SWANWICK,

"*July* 25, 1919.

"Your very kind and very welcome note reached me to-day. Believe me I am most glad to have it. I have long felt that I would like to call and see you during your long illness, but I hesitated to intrude at such a time. You must feel very near to the Lord of our spirits, and death when it comes will, I know, seem only a little thing—bringing you nearer still.

THE CHANCEL.

Lectern and Communion Table.

You leave many bright and gracious memories in the hearts of your friends, and I hope you will count me among them. We will 'carry on,' with greater courage because of your long brave fight."

Of all his own personal letters those addressed to his youngest son, in a long succession—are the most intimate, tender and revealing. A large number of these were written as he lay with his thoughts and his desires looking far beyond the horizon of time. Those who visited him, with the privilege of admission to his presence saw even in his face the signs of a rare confidence and calm. It was evident that the message he had proclaimed with intense feeling had been inspired by the certainty of his faith and had been given its urgency by the passion of his soul. His uncomplaining endurance of pain, his self-forgetfulness, with its complement of a constant mindfulness of others, his meek submission to God's will and to abide God's time, and the unflecked loveliness of his spirit reminded those who sat beside him of that Simeon whose eyes had seen the salvation of the Lord and was ready to depart in peace. The two poles of his thinking were the assurance of the forgiving grace of God revealed in Christ

and the equal certainty of that Father's House which he had so often proclaimed. His outlook was as often upward in its desire as outward in its human affection. In reply to a question he wrote, in one of his letters to his son, this brief statement of what may be called his vision of the certainty of the world and the life to come.

"What do I think heaven is like? And how much am I looking forward to it?

"To take the second question first—I am trying to fix my thoughts daily on the end which cannot be very far away at my time of life. This means the effort to imagine myself in the Presence of my Judge, with all the vanity of this world and its make-believe stripped away, and nothing left but reality. We so often and so largely 'walk in a vain show' here. But there—at the judgment seat of Christ we shall be manifested as we are. 'If Thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O, Lord, who shall stand?' Under a sense of my sin and unworthiness I hide myself beneath the righteousness of my Saviour. 'Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling.' 'Hide me, O, my Saviour, hide, Beneath the shadow of Thy wings.' This is how I look for-

ward to eternity, and I do so every day and almost every hour I live.

"The second question is What do I think of heaven? Heaven to me is just the Presence of Jesus Christ. I can hardly ever get beyond that. It is good to think of the white-robed multitudes; of all the dear ones who have gone on their way before us; of all the inexpressible joys and glory that must await the redeemed, and among which the mind gets lost. But I always come back to the main thing—the vision of the Lamb in the midst of the throne—that marvellous union of God and man: and my mind rests there. Heaven is Christ. And then, too, is it not said that we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is? That is heaven to the Redeemed.

"God bless you, and may you and I be counted worthy to enter through the gates into the city. There is but one way—as you know."

Another of these letters, with some personal omissions, will give some conception of what may be called an ideal relationship of father and son. It has all the more moment in that it is a message written when the end was not far away.

"I need not say how deeply your mother and

I appreciated the letter in which you speak of your shortcomings. These will be more obvious to yourself than to others, especially when you take yourself to task in the presence of Him who searches us and knows us better than we search or know ourselves. That is sacred ground between yourself and your God into which none of us dare to enter. We all need to take ourselves just as we are, again and again, into the presence of our Saviour, and to ask from him the light by which to see ourselves as he sees us, and to seek grace to overcome what is unlike His meek and lowly spirit.

"I hope you are having a good time to-day with your Bible and at the Services. When one comes to lie on one's back, as I am forced to do, the Sabbath ordinances wear a different look from that they have sometimes had. I am fairly well to-day—although that is not much to say. However I am thankful and I send you very much love."

We need not wonder that this brief letter, that represents the intense spiritual desire of a father for the well-being of a son, also reflects the deepest emotion of his life with its due effect on the character of those who lived under its influence. When the members of his household

left the home they passed out of the door with the unforgettable memory of the counsels and especially of the prayers which committed them to God's care and keeping. There is one distinctive evidence of the sanctifying influence of these ordinances of the home. There must be few who do not know of the Epilogue with which the British Broadcasting Company closes its Sunday evening programme throughout the country. Christian men and women have often expressed their thanksgiving for its blessing at eventide. What can be more impressive in itself, more uplifting to a devout mind, more comforting to the lonely and the sorrowing, or even more appealing to those who have been heedless of the Lord's day, and of any house of prayer, than this brief time of quietness in which the call of God is heard! How solemnizing and strengthening is the recollection that millions are sharing in these ten minutes of devotion and realizing anew the power of that faith which overcomes the world! As the voices of the choir, in their psalm or hymn of adoration fall upon the ear, as the words of the scripture carry the message of God's will and desire into the secret place of the heart and conscience and as the chanted benediction closes this brief period of apartness from the world,

the blessing of the Almighty falls upon the spirit. It is known that this deeply impressive service was instituted by a son of this house, the head of the B.B.C., and that he owes his inspiration, manifest in its ordering, to the remembrance of the hallowed hour of family worship with which his father closed the Sunday evening in the manse of the College Church. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ besought in that evening hour proved its potency in the life and work of his son. Of a truth, in this Epilogue, and indeed in the moral and religious atmosphere of the B.B.C., Dr. George Reith, being dead, yet speaketh.

Among the reinforcements to his faith in this sunset hour were the messages from the congregation. His replies are marked by his native responsiveness. They are indeed Epistles of the New Testament, akin to those of Paul from his prison, as he faced the final issue of life. Three of these may be set in the record.

"THE MANSE,
"*May* 3, 1919.

"MY VERY DEAR PEOPLE,—

"Here I lie awaiting God's will and time. It is a cross to me I must confess. But this is to

question the wisdom and the love of God; and on these I rest.

"My dear people, I pray for you more than ever I did, or had time for before, and I know that prayer is never in vain. I have had a new vision of my whole life from this sick-bed, and a new interpretation of the words of the 139th Psalm, 'O, Lord, Thou hath searched me and known me.' Into that searching knowledge of His, He has admitted me. So that perhaps, if 'they also serve, who only stand and wait,' I may be giving some service not otherwise possible. In all this, the faithfulness and sufficiency of Jesus Christ remain.

"God bless you all. You are much on my heart, and I hope you remember me from time to time in your prayers. 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.' Yes, even that of a contrite and humble soul. 'This poor man cried and the Lord heard him.' Grace, Mercy and Peace be with you now and evermore.

"GEORGE REITH."

The second letter is one written when he was somewhat easier, both in body and mind, and his thoughts were busy with the work of the congregation.

"THE MANSE,
"*30th August* 1919.

"MY VERY DEAR FRIENDS,—

"May I send you my benediction as you begin a new season of Church fellowship and work? We all deeply regret the absence of my dear colleague, and not less its cause. May he return more than ever in the fullness of the gospel; and meanwhile I am sure that his absence will be a call to you all to keep the work of the congregation from suffering in the least. I am still lying awaiting the Lord's will. When first set thus wholly aside from work, I thought that a few months at most would bring the end. I have been mistaken; by the end of September I shall have been a year in my room. The mere idea of such a thing would have been intolerable at the time. But the experience has not been by any means intolerable. On the contrary the Lord has granted me much of His gracious presence, and, with a great deal of weakness and discomfort hitherto, I have been free from positive suffering, for which I am profoundly thankful, and I await the call home in faith and hope.

"I pray daily for you all, especially for those who have any burden or trial laid on them, and for the very old, and for the dear

young people. May the coming season be one of great brightness and blessing to all your homes ; and do not forget your old minister in your prayers—in himself, nothing but a poor sinner : in Christ, he looks for everything. You do not forget him in your many kindnesses. Praying that the Lord's richest blessing may descend upon you,

"I am,

"Your most affectionate old minister,

"GEORGE REITH."

The third letter is one of the last he wrote and its calm and its clear outlook toward the end are characteristic of the man, who never feared to face every adventure in life, because of his hold upon the eternal certainties.

"THE MANSE,

"*18th October* 1919.

"MY VERY DEAR FRIENDS,—

"'*You also helping together with me by prayer.*' I daresay some of you have, on reading these words, wondered why an Apostle like Paul should have thought it worth while to assure his friends that their prayers helped him, but so it was. To get or to give good is ever one of the best pleas for asking the spiritual sympathy of

those from whom good is received or to whom it is given. As Paul travelled from place to place, he felt a stronger man for Christ's work as he realized that loving hearts were praying for him before the throne of grace. So it is with me. I know that your prayers have been answered for me. Living, magical links have been forged between the Church and the Manse : and by the word *helped* I would include all that makes my body sufficient for its burden, and my soul ever able to say, ' Not my will, but Thine be done.' Pray on, my very dear friends, and do not faint. Our opportunity and time for prayer will soon be over. But I have such clear proof of your answered prayers that I felt it would be ungracious not to acknowledge it at the earliest moment.

" Meantime, and on this blessed Sabbath day, when my heart is in full fellowship with you (because in fellowship, I think, with Christ), while the Lord permits you the privileges he denies to me, although the other privilege of larger and more uninterrupted space for prayer for you is given, I am still, my very dear friends,

" Your voiceless but heart-full Minister,

" GEORGE REITH."

After fifteen months' patient waiting in the outer chamber he passed into the inner sanctuary on 9th December 1919. Most literally, he fell asleep. The news was received with many tender recollections by a great multitude of mourners. The tributes paid to him and to his service, not only from the courts of his own Church, and from the personalities of all the Christian communions, but from the many religious and philanthropic agencies, whose work he had shared and furthered, were most explicit in their expression of the respect in which he had been held. The notices in the public Press were all touched with that grace of reference which he had always evoked. But, most naturally, the most marked expression came from his own people, whose memories were quickened, whose judgment was even more appreciative, as they recalled his unselfishness of service, and the truth and beauty of his character. He was borne to his last resting place on 12th December. A great company of mourners gathered to the service which was held in the College and Kelvingrove Church. The Rev. Professor Clow, as Moderator of the Presbytery, presided, and the other ministers who took part in the service were the Rev. Professor Milligan, the Rev. Professor Mac-

gregor, the Rev. Dr. Carroll, the Rev. Dr. Wells and the Rev. George A. Frank Knight. After the service a procession of mourners, led by the 1st Glasgow Company of the Boys' Brigade, left the Church door and walked through the West End Park before the cortège as far as to the University Avenue. There they lined up on both sides of the Avenue, while the hearse and the carriages passed on to the Western Necropolis, where Principal Martin of the New College, Edinburgh, conducted the service at the grave.

On the Sunday morning the Commemoration Services were held in the Church. Professor Clow, who conducted the morning service, prefaced his witness to the unfaltering faith, faultless loyalties and noble Christian character of Dr. Reith as a minister of the Gospel, by preaching from St. John xiii. 23, " Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom, one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved," emphasizing the remarkable kinship in spirit, and even similarity in life, manifested by Dr. Reith to this beloved disciple. Mr. Knight, at the evening hour, based his message on Hebrews xiii. 7 (R.V.), " Remember them that had the rule over you, who spake unto you the Word of God ; and, considering the issue of their life, imitate their

faith." As the preacher recalled, in a succession of presentations, the reach and range of service and sacrifice which Dr. Reith had given and the power and the grace of his word, with the abiding influence of his ministry, he made the remembrance of him both a solemn injunction and a tender and compelling desire.

" Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth saith the Spirit: that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

It has been said, with a large measure of truth, that a man's inmost character is revealed by his attitude towards life and its values as he looks out towards its end. That sentence was given a sustained witness in the calm and courage, the solicitude for others, and the all-conquering faith of Dr. Reith's closing years. Three and a half years before his death he passed through the experience of an operation so severe that his family medical attendant expressed the opinion, to Dr. Reith himself, that he would never preach again. He listened with a quiet acceptance of what seemed to be the will of God. But that restful submission so furthered the recovery of his strength that he came out of his time of silence to a renewal

of his coveted service. Mr. A. Ernest Maylard, the surgeon who performed the operation, paid this finely appreciative tribute, notable also because it engrosses the experience of all who had the privilege of entrance to what they felt to be the ante-chamber of the sanctuary beyond.

"For two years and three months after his operation, until September 1918, Dr. Reith took duty in his own Church. Few of those who listened to his pulpit discourses, punctuated as they often were with some of those vigorous outbursts of religious fervour so characteristic of his earlier preaching days, knew the depth of perfect resignation and Christian fortitude of the man who spoke. Throughout his long and depressing illness he was spared the painful suffering too frequently the concomitant of such conditions, and it was gratitude more than complaint that constantly passed his lips for all the loving sympathy and attention he received. Until failing mental vigour in the last few weeks of his illness made it impossible, he thoroughly enjoyed a chat, and hearty was the welcome he always gave me when, occasionally calling as I did, we talked over hill and mountain rambles, a pastime in which he and I had mutual sympathies. Indeed, it was but a month before his death that he vividly described to me his walks over the mountains around Braemar.[1] I, like so

[1] This love of the hills, with the joy of their ascent and the rapture of the view of the far distances, was gratified by his many ascents of the peaks of the Scottish Highlands. An even deeper delight was given by his visits to Switzerland. He was recognized as a strenuous and dauntless Alpine climber, whose zest in the adventure was as contagious as his fellowship was inspiring and enriching to those who were his companions in these coveted exploits.

many others, have lost a kind and ever helpful friend, whose nobleness, forbearance, and fortitude, in one of the most trying and distressing of complaints, I have never seen equalled."

That rare and difficult submission to the will of God was the expression of the spirit of one who was more than a conqueror through the power of an infinite love. But it must not be forgotten, as he so often gratefully said, that he was strengthened by the solicitous care and self-denying devotion of his wife. Through all the years of his ministry, and especially as he passed through the shadowing and straining experiences of some of his later days, she strengthened his hand in God. Not only in the offices of the sick-chamber, but by her counsel and companionship, her helpfulness in the social intercourse of the home, and her share in the fulfilment of the obligations regarded as due from a Scottish manse, she served, it may be truly said, with him in the Gospel. It was an inexpressible comfort to him that Mrs. Reith and his younger daughter were the presences of grace in the home in the end and at the end.

XI: THE PREACHER'S MESSAGE

1. THE EVANGELIST

GONE ASTRAY

"I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments."—*Psalm* cxix. 176.

THIS psalm is the longest, most sustained, and fullest expression of the devotion of a believer in God and in the wisdom and the wonder of his commandments. Sometimes its sentences reveal the standpoint of a man who has made the law of God the study of a lifetime. Sometimes he dwells upon its moral splendour and its compelling truth with calm aphorisms and restrained expressions. Again he abounds in exclamation of wonder and delight. But ever and again, as we read, we come to those sentences where the searching moral energy of the law of God compels him to be a penitent, and his word of exultation becomes the cry of a penitent man.

Here, in the very closing verse of this long and carefully thought out appreciation, he

utters himself in a mood of penitence. We find in its few words three attitudes. It is a confession. "I have gone astray like a lost sheep." It is a petition. "Seek thy servant." It is a plea. "For I do not forget thy commandments." Let us enter into the experience behind this prayer.

I

"I have gone astray like a lost sheep." This confession coming as it does at the close of this long meditation on the blessedness of those who keep the law of God has a special significance. Throughout the course of the psalm the writer again and again affirms that he will keep God's commandments, make it his study to abide in them all the day, and even, at times, declares his devotion and writes, "I have sought thee with my whole heart." But he ends with this humble and self-abasing confession. He is looking back in a calm review of his past and a searching restrospect of his life, and this is what he sees. This is his last word about himself. In all likelihood he is a man past middle life, perhaps nearing its close. It is certain at least that he is keeping the closing days of his years in view. This is his sober and impartial estimate of the course of his life: "I have gone

astray like a lost sheep." He sees himself as one who is about to meet God in judgment, and this is the feature of his past that arrests his eye. He does not mean, of course, that there has been nothing fair and loyal and true in his past. But he declares that, summing up the whole, with the consciousness of God's eye resting upon him, with the knowledge of God's holy law as his standard of judgment, and keeping in mind the tender care, as of a shepherd, that has never left him in his utmost thoughtlessness, he finds no other word to say than that he has gone astray like a lost sheep. That is the truth which rises in his mind, possesses his memory, and bears in upon his heart and conscience. There is not one of us who has not, with the psalmist, also forsaken the shepherd, broken away from the pasture, and, as we are true to the past, we can kneel with him and utter his cry.

Gone astray! The words imply that there has been a right path forsaken, and that declares that there has been a law violated. Astray—from what? From the way and the rule of life marked out, quite clearly, by the will of God. This thoughtful, believing man affirms this certainty of such a way and such a rule. His going astray is a transgression of the

law of the keeper of the sheep. If such a law were external, given from without in the shape of positive commands, as it has been, it would be heard with binding power. But it is obvious that this man recognizes the law calling upon him to be holy and just and true, operating in the court of his own conscience. It is the real and true expression of the deepest and most sacred intuition of his soul. The word from without is echoed in every man's case in the house of the soul within.

There is need to-day of declaring that there is an absolutely right and an absolutely wrong; an absolutely true and an absolutely false. There are, for every man, radical and ineffaceable moral distinctions. Right and wrong are not mere matters of opinion, or of fancy, or of relation to circumstances. No man dare say that what is right to me here may not be right to you there, however condemnation for wrong-doing may differ in its severity. Every human life is imbedded in divine law, and is safeguarded by it. The supreme aim of every human code, however dull and dark may be the consciousness, is to express that moral righteousness which underlies the nature and the constitution of all that can be called human. It is this fact that gives such a confession its meaning and its

poignancy. What is it to go astray? Why should I not go as I choose? Why should there be such a thing as an "astray"? Why should I not follow the impulse which happens to be the strongest and gratify the desire and so express myself to my delight? Why should I resist such an impelling passion? The reason is that life is under law, that life must be conformed to law, that life must keep every whisper of that law, else it is false to itself and false to the principles which make up its moral nature. There is such a thing as duty. There are obligations which are moral imperatives. To put it more simply and more truly, there is the will of God for life to obey and to express.

If this may seem to make life hard and to declare God as one who is severe and exacting we have not understood why God has ordained His law. Every law of God is the utterance not only of one whose will is righteousness, but of one whose heart is full of infinite love. It is because God is love and cares for us as his children, and pities us in our need and poverty, and has stooped in Christ to suffering and to shame in order to rescue us from evil, that He has made His righteous law. But when that truth dawns on a man's mind he will not only sing his psalm of praise to God's law as did this

psalmist, but he will see what it is to go astray from it. To go astray from God's law is to grieve the most unselfish and disinterested affection, to wound the heart that is eternally solicitous for our good, to break loose from the arms that would hold us back from self-destruction. Nay, more, it is the gesture of the embrace of a tenderness that only asks to be allowed to lavish itself—a gesture completed in the outstretched arms of the bitter cross of Christ. To go astray like a lost sheep is to desert the path laid down not only by righteousness but by love.

This figure of the lost sheep sums up the picture of the sheep which strays heedlessly from the flock and from the shepherd's care, wanders on engrossed with new pastures heedless of all danger, until at length it becomes the prey of some wolf, ever on the watch for the wandering and unguarded creature. It recalls that wilful one of the flock, eager for fresh green grass, leaping from ledge to ledge until it suddenly discovers itself to be on the brink of an impassable precipice with no way of return. How many find this simple parable presenting the experience of their lives. There is suggested in this figure the recollection of the folly and waywardness, the neglect of the warning call, the

absorption in the gratification of the senses and of the sensual desire of the moment. There is recalled that daring denial of every other interest, and of all that should bind us to pure and simple and lowly ways, which so often characterizes our going astray. If a sense of our ingratitude to Christ, and our rebellion against the will of God and His law be the chief element in our consciousness of sin, the next to it is the overpowering conviction of our own incredible folly, our wilful stupidity, our blindness to its shame, and our deafness to every voice of appeal except the single, overmastering desire of satisfying the dark passions of our hearts. These truths touch this going astray with a certain pathos that mingles with the shame.

But this confession sounds a still deeper note. This writer does not regard going astray as an affair of small moment, an exciting excursion into forbidden fields, a temporary lapse from virtue and honour. He feels its seriousness, its danger. He sees it to be a transgression which is not only condemned by the law and the will of God, but is also perilous to the transgressor. It is misleading, delusive, false in its promises and dark and deadly in its issues. Sin is always misery, pain, suffering, death. Sometimes you

hear of men saying even of some deed, which they are ashamed to confess, that it has been a venial error, a trifling aberration from right, but that repentance will be an easy step and no harm has been done. Those who speak in that way do not know what sin is. They do not realize the deceitfulness of sin. They have never understood the depth and range of a true repentance—the horror of the gross darkness in which they have walked, now loathed, and the revulsion of the whole inner man—that is repentance. This man on his knees knew that the path of evil, thoughtlessly entered upon, the lapse only for a moment, has a subtle power in it to keep the feet fast, and prevent all return. No one ever knows where the single step aside may lead him, and where there lies, in the least transgression, the beginning and the potentiality of great sin. The most careful, the most moderate, the most prudent of evil-doers—and there are such men—who see nothing very much amiss in following the lust of the flesh, or the pride of life for a space, is only to be compared with that silly lost sheep entering upon the road that leads to death. How many should repeat with an abasing shame, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep."

This is the confession of a humble heart. He

is a man poor in spirit, no longer under the thraldom of pride and self-complacent justification. He has no merits to discant upon. He exhibits nothing by way of counterpoise. He is a transgressor, a lawbreaker with nothing to plead why the punishment of the law should not be inflicted. Sin is sin and nothing else and he does not cloak or dissemble his wrongdoing. There is not one word of extenuation, no measuring down of himself in comparison with his neighbour. He says in the simplest way, "I have gone astray; I have left the right road; I am a wanderer, an evil-doer, a man of the family of Cain, and, like him, I have gone out from the presence of the Lord."

The words of confession are easily uttered. It is not difficult to confess outwardly with the lips—"we are miserable sinners." Yet how hard it is to realize their inner meaning, and to feel all they express as the truest fact we know about ourselves. The proud heart cannot bear it—it will not stoop so low. Of course men freely say, "We have our faults like other people, but we are not so very far astray." But that is just the admission against himself of this penitent soul. For where true penitence is, the sorrow that worketh death must be repented of, and there is a full, free, simple and

intense confession of sin. The voices of the great penitents rise up in proof. "I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord." "I acknowledge my transgression and my sin is ever before me." "I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin." "O God, Thou knowest my foolishness, and my sins are not hid from thee." "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid." That is the speech of the man who has gone astray.

II

"Seek thy servant." Here we have, for one thing, the admission of inability and helplessness to return to the path whence he had strayed. He is helpless as the wandering sheep which could not find the way back to the place of safety. He could stray, but to find his way back is beyond his power. If a higher hand than his does not intervene, he is lost. "Seek thy servant." It is the cry of despair, of entreaty, the bleating of the helpless sheep crying for the shepherd's deliverance. It is this conviction of lostness in sin that fills the sinner's heart with fear. We cannot amend what is wrong. We cannot restore what we have taken away. We cannot undo the past. No man can save himself, and every man who turns his face to God

finds that the first step towards His presence and blessing is the most difficult to take. That step is the confession not only of our sin, but of our weakness and helplessness. We take that step when we lie at the feet of God with the words upon our lips, "I am no more worthy to be called thy son." "Seek thy servant." We sometimes forget that scripture always represents, not man seeking God, but God seeking man. For man seeks God only after he knows that God has revealed Himself to men as a seeker after His straying and lost children. The tragedy of the human soul is precisely here. For until God seeks us, as the shepherd goes out to search for the lost sheep, we never seek Him. Too many never realize how God seeks them, and their soul tragedy ends in death. But all those exhortations in scripture—to return to God, to call upon His name, to seek Him with the whole heart, to cry unto Him in the darkness, are based on the fact that God has come near to us in His Son, and has revealed Himself as the God, who hears those who call, and is found of those who seek. Helpless as we are in our sin, we can still cry to God for mercy, and our cry will not be unheeded. The cry of the penitent reaches God's heart, and brings from heaven a sure salvation.

This cry, "Seek thy servant," on this Old Testament sinner's lips should be found with an intenser note on ours. We remember that the Son of God has heard this cry on the lips of the millions of humanity, and has come to seek and save that which is lost. In such a prayer we are only responding to His voice, appealing to us in our darkness, and only grasping the outstretched hand of the Saviour who has travelled in the way toward us with the resources of His redeeming love. Yet it is a prayer too seldom uttered, and is found only on the lips of those who are conscious, not only of their evil behaviour, but of their weakness and their helplessness. It is the cry uttered by the man who is sincere in his desire for a holier life, and yet finds himself lost in the mazes and labyrinths of evil, held in the bondages of his iniquities, finding himself in the darkness and only able to utter his cry, Lord, help me, I perish. The secret of all salvation is the consciousness of the presence and power of the Good Shepherd, seeking, finding, taking into His care and leading all the way back to God. That is the experience Paul set in his surcharged sentence, "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me? I thank God through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

This petition has its most potent counsel

because it is the evidence of a true repentance. Many will say in a moment of conviction, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep." But they will not go on to say, "Seek thy servant." There is a sorrow for sin like that of Saul when he exclaimed, "I have erred, and played the fool exceedingly." But that is often a blind cul-de-sac, a road leading nowhere. It has no real passion for deliverance from sin, and no eager desire to be led, through forgiveness, into the large and free realm of the fellowship and service of God. A true repentance must have behind it a deep faith and a true desire, and it must pass into a turning from evil into the very presence and the favour of God. This penitent's prayer beseeches God to bring him back to himself. He has no craving to wander astray. He wishes to have done with evil, to be safe at home in the embrace of the love he has grieved, but will grieve no more. If every man could look Godward with the cry, "Lord, I am lost, if left to myself I shall remain for ever in the darkness, but seek me until I am found," he would utter the prayer that touches the heart of God.

"Thou knowest the way to bring me back,
My fallen spirit to restore;
O, for Thy truth and mercy's sake,
Forgive and bid me sin no more."

III

"For I do not forget thy commandments." This is the plea which this penitent urges that he may press his need upon the mind and will of God. At first sight it seems a needless addition to his prayer. We are all assured that no reason is required why God should hear every sincere human cry for help. It is reason enough, as we know the mind and will of God that we are in need, and that we cast ourselves on that divine mercy which never fails a trusting soul. And we know that there never is any worthiness in us that can entitle us to be partakers of the salvation of God. It is all of grace—grace to the undeserving, as well as mercy to the lost. But in every return to God there must be deeply lodged within the heart a willingness to enter upon a life of a new obedience. It is by no means enough to be affected by the thought of our folly and our sin. It is not enough to seek to be delivered from it and from its consequences. There should pulse within the heart this thought that the most intolerable aspect of sin is its rebellion against God's will, and its breaking of those commandments which are the expression of both His law and His love. It is too common a thing for a

man to ask deliverance from his evil past, and from the power of an evil presence, without a deeply lodged desire to walk in the way of God's commandments. But this penitent summons up God's holy law, realizes anew its wondrous grace and he cries, despite his evil-doing, " I do not forget thy commandments."

Here is disclosed a mind, and a desire, to return to the paths of righteousness because they are paths of righteousness, and paths where the Shepherd Himself leads the flock. This plea reveals the inner mind that the prayer is not one simply of deliverance from an evil path and its consequences, or of rescue from a danger whose peril is now so well known. It is the sincere outflow of the heart for the deliverer Himself, and for those great commandments which are the counsels of His love. There is no more signal mark of love than a joy in the commands of a lover. When a man's soul goes out in desire to keep God's commandments, when he can surely say, modestly and humbly, " I do not forget thy commandments," he discloses the mind of the man, who knows how he has broken them all in time past, yet kept them in reverence in his secret heart, and now has a passion for an unfaltering obedience. He longs to walk again in the path of a new loyalty, and

to find himself so engrossed with a new service of God, that he can take up his exultant word set down in an hour of insight, "Thy statutes have become my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." As one devout soul has set it in impassioned lines:

> "O, God, I love Thee; not that my poor love
> May win me entrance to Thy heaven above;
> Nor yet that strangers to Thy love must know
> The bitterness of everlasting woe.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> "Not for the hope of glory or reward,
> But even as Thyself hast loved me, Lord,
> I love Thee, will love Thee, and adore,
> Who art my King, my God, for evermore."

"I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy precepts."

2. THE EXPOSITOR OF THE WORD

THE PASSION PLAY OF SAMSON[1]

"And Manoah said, How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him?"—*Judges* xiii. 12.

"And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him."—*Judges* xvi. 20.

"And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee only this once, O God."—*Judges* xvi. 28.

Everyone who reads through the vivid dramatic record of Samson's history will be arrested by the perplexing contrasts both of his character and of his life. He is the child of many prayers, whose godly parents received him as a special gift from God's hand, who, before his birth, was consecrated to His service. Yet he ends his restless and troubled life in a Philistine prison, a wreck, his eyes put out, chained to the handle of a millstone, and grinding corn for his enemies. He is a youth of manly stature and exceptional strength, a champion for righteousness whose witness has given him a place in the roll of the heroes who

[1] The allusion is to the passion play of Ober-Ammergau, with its presentation of the Holy One who consummated His witness by His death on the redeeming Cross. Here is presented, in dramatic scenes, the story of a great sinner, who became a great penitent, and consummated his witness by his death.

kept the faith. Yet he pulses with a hot animal passion through all his years. He is a man who became a judge in Israel, with an unfaltering loyalty to his people, and he stands out as the champion of their liberty. Yet he was regarded with suspicion, never acclaimed with honour, and, on one occasion, surrendered into the hands of their implacable foes. Still more striking is the assurance that his great deeds were done under the guiding presence and power of the Spirit of God. Yet he yielded to a sensual passion, so enslaving that it made him a helpless captive to his lust.

But in our judgment of Samson we must not arraign him at the bar of the enlightened Christian conscience. With all his flaws and imperfections he was the champion of the faith in God. God's champions have not always been faultless men. He lived in the days when sins of the flesh were not so keenly reprobated as they have been since Jesus called men to be pure in heart. And while we must not make light of his sins, or take a single dark line out of his shame, or gloss over any one of his evil deeds, we shall do well to think of him as we think of the great Scottish national poet, so that, keeping in mind the implicit condemnation of the Scripture

page, we shall find Burns' words upon our lips :

> " Then at the balance let's be mute :
> We never can adjust it.
> What's done we partly may compute,
> But know not what's resisted."

There are four acts in this tragedy. The first is—the ordering of Samson's youth. The second is—the years of silence. The third is—the great disloyalty. The fourth is—the witness unto death.

I

" How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him ? " cried Manoah, realizing the sacredness of the trust committed to them. Samson's mother was a woman with a large heart, longing for a son whom she would joyfully dedicate to the service of God. His father was a man who believed in prayer, and here he beseeches God for guidance in the upbringing of his child. Out of a motherhood and fatherhood like that God made a home for Samson, as He has done for many a saint whose exploits are written in the eternal annals, if not on those of time. " How shall we order the child ? " That is the question this father puts to Him who alone can answer it. That is the question

every one of you should put regarding your child. To train up a child in the way he should go is one of the most difficult tasks in life, and God's wisdom is indispensable for it. Let your child be the subject of special prayer. Consult God concerning the ordering of your children and their lives. When they pass out into the world from under your roof, you will be able to say, with your parting gift, "My son, my daughter, temptations you know not yet will assail you, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, and the God of your father and mother will be your God."

But the day came when this faith was sorely shaken. These godly folk had to plead with their son, "O my son, is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?" In spite of all their entreaties, he steers his headstrong way to the maiden of Timnath, and the broken-hearted parents set out for the wedding, questioning themselves what they had done, or left undone, in the training of their son, that he should make such a choice. Was it for this that they had watched and prayed, and taught and counselled? Did God really answer prayer, or was the fault in them, and had they become

too proud of their strong and handsome boy, and of the great future in store for them, instead of keeping humble in heart before God, and guarding themselves against the uprisings of vain ambitions, too little heedful lest their son should be led astray by his gifts. It is a cross that God lays on Christian parents to see a son or daughter marry, but not in the Lord. No Philistine good can ever atone for such a misunion—neither houses nor lands, nor riches nor social position, not even a strong and natural affection. For where hearts are not one in the love and service of Christ, the door is left open for misunderstanding and dispeace, and the alienation of evil habit and ungodly desire.

Take your parents' advice, young people, take your parents' advice. They know more of life and its dangers than you do. Submit your impulsive desires to their calm, temperate, experienced and loving wisdom. Your impulses may be finger-posts to the right direction, a genuine movement of God's spirit within your own soul. But if your parents are what they ought to be, parents "in the Lord," and if you are what you ought to be, children "in the Lord," both you and they will come to an entire agreement in this, that it is not to be

right in their eyes or in your own, but what both you and they know to be right in the eyes of the Lord. How many foil their father's prayers and their mother's counsels and bring shame upon their name because, like Samson, they please the desire of the flesh!

II

When we consider these years of silence—the twenty years during which Samson judged Israel, we are amazed to find that we know nothing of them except that bare fact. We are fain to hope that they were years of honest, self-denying work for God and the people, when Samson put into practice the lessons of his experience, and took care not to risk again his divine vocation by a selfish compromise with what was evil. We would fain believe that, in God's dealing with him, he distinguished these silent years by a life of watchful care. The qualities of mind and heart that go to make a chivalrous soul were lavishly bestowed upon him. An attractive personality—it would not have been wonderful if he were more beloved by the people than any other judge. He was a modest man, never boasting of his exploits. He was a great-souled man allowing no selfish counsels to guide his public life. With these

things before us we would fain judge the silence of these twenty years as due to a faithful service, approved of God and appreciated by his people, rather than by the brief space of a period at its close when a single wild wayward impulse of the flesh was followed by its tragic retribution. God's providential dealings are sometimes so ordered that a single lapse from virtue is visited with an instant and despoiling penalty, such as does not fall on sins long persisted in, and even darker in their deliberate apostasy.

On the other hand it may be that those twenty silent years are accurately sampled by the incidents recorded. It may be that, if all the records of the history were before us, we should read of reckless outbursts of passion involving him in shame, followed by God's infinite patience and long-suffering mercy, issuing in repentance on his own part, and a more wary walking in the path of His service, with hours of vehement desire for a closer walk with God. Such sinning and repenting, with touches of gentle chastisement and little or no outward change in life, may continue for years. Then God's forbearance is worn out. The line between these lesser sins, and some self-willed act of a hopeless and irreversible nature, is crossed. The sinner is at last caught and held by the

cords of his own transgression. There may come a genuine repentance, and God may forgive the sin, humbly and brokenly confessed. But the penalty remains through life, and its shadow lies on the mind, and its penalty afflicts the flesh, through all the years.

To which of these two categories Samson belonged we cannot definitely determine. If we incline to judge by the prolonged silence of these twenty years, and by the popularity that grew around his magnetic personality, and the charm of his flashing wit, our verdict will lean to mercy's side. We shall hold that these recorded blots lay more on the surface of his life, and are accounted for by the leaping passions of a big manhood. But we shall hold that beneath all there was the real man, the true man, whom it would be unfair to condemn by one or two stumbles in the dark. But if we incline to judge by the samples given on this page our verdict will be that, with all that might have had an ennobling influence, these years witness a slow but sure moral deterioration, until the word of fateful warning was fully verified, and we can but realize that "He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Which of these alternatives is the right interpretation

of these middle years of Samson's life God alone knows, as He alone knows of so many others spiritually akin to Him.

III

Let us come to the certain tragedy of this unique career in his great disloyalty. The curtain, which had dropped for twenty years. is raised again, and Samson reappears on the stage once more. We expected to see him mellowed by his experience, a wiser and more careful man than in his youth. But the disappointing story is told in a sentence. "Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her." This vulgar intrigue with a loose Philistine woman who worms out of him, by her wiles, the secret of his strength, is a sin upon which the judgment of God and man coincide. She betrayed him to his enemies. They put out his eyes, and they carried the poor victim of his passion to their jail. They fastened fetters of brass on his limbs, fetters he cannot burst now, and they chain him in the grinding house to the task of a slave. As Milton chants :

"O, dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse, without all hope of day!
O, impotence of mind, in body strong!
But what is strength without a double share of wisdom?
Proudly secure, but liable to fall by weakest subtleties."

That awful and eclipsing penalty Samson had not foreseen. When he awoke from his sleep he said, "I will go out, as at other times before, and shake myself. He wist not that the Lord was departed from him." His immense bodily strength was not a gift of nature; it was the gift of divine grace, a special enduement of the Spirit of God, for the great purpose of his life. It depended, as all spiritual force depends, on the keeping of the vow of a man's dedication to God. Samson was under the vow of the Nazarites, the total abstainers of the day. The unshorn hair was the badge of their consecration. Yet, when that badge was taken from him, his strength was gone. Had he been faithful to his God, God would have been faithful to him. But it is out of the question that a man can keep company with harlots, and still find the strength of an hour of consecration throbbing within him. The presence of the Spirit consists only with an upright and self-denying moral character. God crosses no threshold where the angels of evil are welcome. "O, when wilt thou come to me?" cries the psalmist, "then I will walk within my house with a perfect heart." Samson could not have prayed that prayer.

We are again surprised that Samson imagined

that he could retain and exercise the enduement of the grace of God, while yielding to his debasing passion. Yet we see the same amazing ignorance and thoughtlessness in those who persist in careless and sinful lives, and yet seem to believe that they can easily pass out of the fatal chamber of their sin, and shake themselves clear of its contamination and weakness. "Grey hairs are here and there upon them, and they know it not." Others can detect the symptoms of moral and spiritual decay, but they are often hid from the man himself, and he keeps up the outward routine when, in his heart, he is a traitor to the faith.

There is no more solemn truth than this that we may undergo the most tremendous and incalculable loss—the loss of the Spirit of God—and yet may not know it. A Church may lose the presence and power of God's Spirit and may have "Ichabod" written large upon its work and worship, and yet be outwardly much as before. A nation may be disloyal in its heart, and base in its ideals, and yet it may think itself in the van of progress. A Christian congregation may make a brave show in its hours of service, and yet a dark sin may be blinding the eyes of the preacher and his people. That is the most grievous and desperate thing—not to

know it. It is to have the form of godliness, but to deny its power. Dear brethren, can there be a more disastrous loss, or a more awful condition than that of the loss of the spirit of God and yet not know it? Let the prayer rise from your lips every morning, "O my God, take away everything that keeps me from seeing what hides Thy face from me, but cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me."

IV

We leave this shadowed record to think of the last noble witness of this great soul. The climax of the story presents Samson brought out to make sport for his captors, in the agony of his shame as they mock him. Deeper still is the anguish of his soul, in that, in the very prime of life, by his own wilful act, he had desecrated the gift of God, and was now cast off to become the sport and derision of the Philistines. But he was a man of a broken and a contrite heart. The thoughtless folly that had laid him low, and stained his name, was remembered with a self-abasing repentance. In that prayer that "God would strengthen him only this once," there is the revelation of a penitent who cannot dare to ask too much of God. Yet Samson found

that where sin abounded grace did much more abound. Bunyan tells us that the pilgrims saw that there was a way to hell from the very gates of heaven. Samson found, as you may have found, that there is a way to heaven from the very gates of hell. As the hair of his head began to grow again, and as the thrill of slowly returning strength tingled in his veins, Samson realized the sign of God's returning mercy, and he made his pathetic appeal. He did not dream of such a renewal of strength as would burst his fetters. But he realized that God had ordained him for great service, and that, even in this hour, as a man shackled and blind, he might sacrifice himself in a victory over the enemies of God. This poor, blinded, man-forsaken, broken man caught hold of the skirts of God, in his passionate prayer, and as he bent himself, the pride and power of Philistia lay buried in the ruins of Dagon's temple. He laid down his life for the faith of Israel and its people. It was a supreme act of faith, and it wiped out his guilty past. The Hebrew chronicler interprets the historic significance of the act when he writes, " So the dead whom he slew at his death were more than they he slew in his life."

What a message we have for those who may have been too conscious of a base disloyalty, a

defiling passion, a night of shame. From Samson's prayer, and his last great deed, there come the counsels of hope. Your immortal soul can be rescued from the eternal peril. So, mortify your besetting lust : shatter your secret idol : let the oldest among you turn again to Him who forgives all sin, justifies the ungodly, and sets no limits to the reception of His grace, but those of life itself. If you are tempted to think—ah, it might have been, it might have been, but not now ; as I have lived in the past I must go on to the end. No, my dear friend, God is willing to take the fragments of a misspent life, and so to renew and reanimate them in Christ, that, as a new creature, you will live a new life in His service and to His glory.

3. THE CHRISTIAN MORALIST

EVERY MAN'S WORK A DIVINE CALLING

"Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God."—1 *Corinthians* vii. 24.

As Paul writes this letter he recalls his ministry in the busy commercial city of Corinth. Like all Greek cities, its population was a motley gathering of all sorts and conditions of men. Greek, Barbarian, and Hebrew, bond and free, mingled in its daily life. The question of the relationship of master and servant, and all its disturbing age-long problems were discussed. Then, as now, there was a deep undertone of discontent. The coming of the Gospel, with its call to brotherhood, quickened the minds of those who had accepted Christ. The slave, who had become a believer, felt his servitude more keenly. Here Paul sends his message of calming counsel, and leads his readers into the strengthening sanctions of the Christian faith. It is to the slave he writes, when he gives this counsel, that every man should in his calling abide with God.

Such a counsel brings us face to face with the subject of the Christian man in the business of the world. It suggests four points of view.

The first is: business as a divine calling. The second: business as a service of man. The third: business as a discipline in the face of its perils. The fourth: business as a means of grace.

I

In the first place: *business as a divine calling*. "Let every man abide in the same calling." Paul regarded a man's occupation as that to which he was "called" by God. The humblest and simplest task was a divine vocation. Every man had his work to do in the world. That truth meets us in the very opening page of the world's history. "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it." The gift of dominion over the earth did not mean an idle possession. It was the breaking in of the stubborn material under the patient enterprise of man. The first and final end of man's creation is to bring this earth into a condition in which all its forces shall be subdued to the will of God for the welfare of man. In that great enterprise every man should bear his part. It is, therefore, natural that He, who came into the world to redeem man from sin, should spend at least eighteen years of His life on earth, working with His hands in the carpenter's shop

at Nazareth. Paul was willing to say that, in those obscure years, with hands hardened by His daily toil, Jesus was about His Father's business, as much as in those later years when He served in His public ministry.

One obvious truth, too often overlooked, emerges here. The Christian faith does not mark the world's common work with a less honourable stamp than that of a calling to which men pay more honour. The Christian man takes up his daily business, goes down to the busy exchange, the wrangling mart, and the common toil, as God's loyal servant. To flee to sheltering hermitages, or to the lonely wilderness, is to desert from the ranks. Every calling to which a man has devoted himself, if it be a lawful one, enters into every department of earth's activities—its industry, its commerce, its manufacture, its tilling of the soil—equally with its science and art. The gospel enters the world with a message that did not fear to confront every earthly ambition. It faced the whole round of life with a certainty of being able to sanctify them all. No man should think that the acceptance of Christ as his Saviour warrants his renunciation of every former tie and all due responsibility. Let him accept his life as he finds it in no reclaiming

mood. "Let every man, wherein he is called, abide with God."

But there are businesses in which no Christian man should abide, for they are such businesses as God does not entitle any man to think of as a divine vocation. To abide with God in such callings is impossible. To imagine that God calls any man to such occupations is to be blind to truth. When a Christian man finds himself implicated in some unworthy business, it becomes an instant personal question as to how he can emancipate himself from his evil yoke, however innocently he may have begun to wear it. And there are businesses where at times it is difficult for those engaged in them to gain any honest profit. All the more must every Christian man make up his mind, as to whether his business is a divine calling, and as to whether his methods are approved by the will of Christ, however they are sanctioned by the customs and standards of men. If he can stand in the midst of it all, and declare that into this business he has been called, and in the conduct of it he will abide in God, he can go on his way, and face every difficulty with the assurance that his feet will find the path of his high calling in the end.

It follows that one of the urgent necessities, especially for those who are beginning life, is

to discover the vocation to which each is called. The broad law is that our calling depends partly on the original gifts with which we have been endowed, and partly by special leading as determined by our circumstances and our relationships. Jesus exemplified them both when He became a carpenter and followed a lowly trade. Yet in the hour, when He looked out on a wider horizon, He saw His vocation, and He heard the call of God. Any young man who finds it difficult to reconcile these two elements, which so often conflict in human experience, can find his path only by making Jesus his model. As he studies Christ's life and experience, he will be in no haste, he will not act in a wilful rebellion. He will continue to fulfil the humblest tasks of his daily hours, and he will be sure that the call to the vocation, whose passion is throbbing in his spirit, will come with a clear imperative. Let a young man or woman earnestly ask of God—What shall I do with my life? They will find that God has endued them with some gift, and baptized them with a spirit which marks them out as differing from others, if He means them to walk in the path of their desire. But if that be not His will, they will surely find that some other vocation will make its inescapable call, and its

duties will lie to their hand as the work which must be done. We must all learn to serve God in His temple, and regard the whole orbit of our life as the opportunity of fulfilling a sacred ministry, whether that fulfilment be to worship and to pray in the inner sanctuary, or to keep the pathways clean that leads to its door. The secret of a high obedience is that every man in the calling wherein he is called shall "abide with God."

II

In the second place: *business as a service of man.* The spirit of free individualism which took possession of men's minds toward the close of the last century and the beginning of the present era, degenerated into a claim to practise exclusive monopolies. The common maxim was "every man for himself." It had the result that the obligation of the individual to the community was disregarded in the struggle to attain a man's own secure footing and pre-eminence in life. The issue was that a comparatively few attained superabundant affluence, while the overwhelming majority lapsed into hard-bitten toil, meanly paid, and often into miserable poverty. The axiom "a fair field and no favour" blinded men to the fact that

mankind ought not to be regarded, in any relation of life, as selfish competitors. They are workers together for one common good. It is singular that, to this day, those who are strenuous advocates of a fair field and no favour, are usually those who postulate the unavoidable inequalities among men. If men are necessarily unequal, as no doubt they are, in gift and talent, it is obvious that a fair field and no favour is inapplicable. Inequality to start with demands that some kind of favour be shown to those who are less capable than others for the work of life.

The solution of this problem lies in the application of the truth that every man's work is also a service of man. It is evident how deeply this would penetrate into all our social relations, if fair scope were given to it. Think of the various motives which men accept in their daily life! To earn a livelihood for ourselves and those depending on us; to make a fortune; to amass enough as rapidly as possible, and to retire from business, and enjoy a leisured life; to rise in the social scale and to gain public position and power—these all are familiar motives, sometimes avowed, which have a widespread influence. Some of them may not be ignoble. The obligation to support those dear

to us has evoked some of the best traits of a fine character. Even when a man throws his whole soul into the work of his life, with the resolve that he will make it his constant study to be of service to the community, in whose midst God has placed him, he may still be under the assault of complex emotions. But, between such a man and that other, who selfishly seeks his own advantage there is a world of difference. There have been men both of high station and of humble lot who have done both. They have made money while serving society, and they have served society with the money they have made. But the only inspiration worthy, in this regard, of a Christian man, is not to make his work enrich himself, but to make his work a means of blessing to his fellowman. Thereby it becomes his highest contribution to the well-being of those who are fellow-workers with him.

But when a man quotes with approval "The world is my oyster," he openly confesses that he regards his vocation, not as a calling of God, but as the work he has chosen to do as a source of wealth, which he shall spend in his own selfish enjoyment. We have the record of experiences where the law of mutual service was held in contempt. We have also seen those men and

women who have made their daily calling a service of their fellow-men. The contrast between the two stands out with increasing clearness as life goes on. The man motived by selfish interest is not only base in method, but he becomes shrivelled in soul. He alone conquers in life's struggle, who resolves to serve his fellow-men in obedience to that noble counsel, "By love serve one another."

III

In the third place: *business as a discipline in the face of its perils.* It is obvious that the business of this world, when it is followed by a man's whole mind and will, is apt to make him regardless of the higher interests of life eternal. It demands so much thought and care that the man, who is busy in its tasks, allows the supreme concerns of the soul to slip to one side. A man cannot seek first the things of earth, without being tempted not to seek the things of the kingdom of heaven at all. We would not have one iota of the enterprise and energy in the work of the world abated. We need more of these rather than less in the hearts of our young men and women. But therein lies the discipline of the desire and will. There is a point at which a noble industry becomes

ignoble, and a faithfulness to a high ambition, becomes an unfaithfulness to the spiritual and the holy. It is while a man is gaining more wealth, and making his business an urgent concern, that he ought to ask himself, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" If a man loses his manhood in his calling, and becomes merely a trader, or a manufacturer, or a workman, and ceases to be a man pulsing with high and pure desires, he needs to be awakened to the fact that the daily labour into which he casts his strength, was meant, not merely to enrich himself, but to be a discipline, wherein self-control, self-sacrifice, and a spiritual ambition should be the mark of his character.

This discipline is the more needed in the time of notable success. It needs few words to remind you of the men and women who were once modest, unassuming, gracious, in manner and devout in spirit, but have been corrupted by success. They have become ambitious for position and power. They have become purse-proud, and their values in life have been degraded. They begin to vie with others in the display of life, in foolish expenditure, in the gratification of petty caprices. They have refused to discipline their habits, to practise a

wise self-denial, to observe the sometimes exacting customs of an earnest piety. Surely the curse falls upon them and upon their children. Those who knew them in earlier days regard them with a true sorrow, when they see how relaxed in habit and in custom their lives have become. The word that was sown in their hearts has been choked by their riches, and brings forth no fruit. It slowly dies.

Could every man whose work is prospering in his hands remember that the time is short, and that it remains that they who buy be as though they possessed nothing, and they that use this world should live as not abusing it, they would find their work, and all it leads them to do and to be, an avenue of an ennobling discipline.

IV

In the fourth place: *business as a means of grace.* There are, as we all know, those means of grace divinely ordained, of which every believing man will make due use. They have their time and their enriching blessing. But we do the work of the world injustice if we forget that it also may have a sacramental efficacy. There are men and women among us who have walked on the highway of life's business, and

have built up for themselves a truth, an honesty, and a purity of character, because they have lived and served in the fear of God, and unto His glory. They may not be wealthy, but they are rich toward God, and men know that God is with them. They may have no gifts such as men value because of their charm and power, but their lives have been open to the Holy Spirit in the days of their toil, and even their faces, especially in hours of silence, are radiant with the sheen of the holy.

The focus point of this truth is reached when we realize that the matter of chief consequence is not the actual work we do, but the spirit in which we fulfil it. Paul was writing to men who were slaves, and we cannot conceive of any situation in life where a human spirit has less incentive to nobility, and more temptation to lose heart, and to sink back into a selfish care for oneself. But the grace of God is bestowed in the very doing of the work. It is simply work—hard, constant, steady, patient, persevering—which enriches the whole man. Thank God for it, and pity from your heart those who do not work, who think with exultation that they have no need to work, who spend their ample means in idle play or heating pleasures. "Blessed be drudgery" ought to be a chant on

the lips of all men. It is in taking up the steady yoke of our calling, and fulfilling the wearying obligations of all the hours of our day, that the best qualities of patience and fidelity and considerateness are wrought in us under the grace of God. The Lord of the vineyard pronounced his most engaging benediction when He said, "Thou hast been faithful in a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things." The "many things" which are given to the faithful in the "few things" are not simply larger opportunities, developed gifts, more fitting aptitudes. They are a self-control, a humility, a submissiveness, a fidelity that have become the warp and the woof of the character. Nay, more, they are a charm of thoughtfulness, a winsomeness and grace of manner and of speech, and a power to cast out of one's heart the tempting thoughts that sometimes lodge there, to our undoing. There are those who, by this patient fulfilment of the humble tasks of life, often in uncongenial company, and under straining conditions, that give evidence of the wondrous development of a true manhood or womanhood, until men see them to be fashioned after the patience and humility of Christ. He also entered into His grace, and confessed its source

when He said, " I am among you, as one that serveth."

Our daily work then is a calling of God, it is a service of man, it is a discipline in our temptations, it is a means of grace. These all are high and pure motives for our loyalty to it. Yet they do not reach to the highest. It is true that we are called to make the best of our manhood, that we may thereby win the commendation of Him who speaks His soft low " Well done, thou good and faithful servant " in every listening ear. But these are not the highest motives. That is reached only when we remember whose we are, and whom we serve. Let a man realize that he has been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, that he is not his own, that nothing in his power belongs to himself, and that therefore his daily work, to the least detail, is a service of the Master-Christ. Then he will go back, as all of us here shall do, and take up our calling, and in it " abide," not only with contentment, but with exultation, in God.

4. THE MYSTIC

MY FATHER'S HOUSE

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."—*St. John* xiv. 1–3.

Three utterances of Jesus had filled the eleven disciples with a keen sense of wonder and dismay. His disclosure of a traitor heart in the company; His announcement of His departure from them; the prediction of Peter's disloyalty: had cast a dark shadow upon the company. Jesus proceeded to comfort them with the pledge that although He must leave them for a while they shall meet again—never to part. He makes the clear intimation that He Himself is the personal revelation of the Father. He gives them an assurance that their faith in Him, because He has gone away from them, will make them stronger men. He adds the promise of another Comforter who will never leave them. Under His guidance and inspiration their knowledge, and their love, and their joy, will abound with a passion they had not known before.

In these words we have just repeated, so full

of music to Christian men's hearts, Jesus sets forth the meaning of His departure from them in its three consequent blessings. It is to be the *objective of their faith*; the *source of their hope*; and the *dynamic of their love.*

I

"Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me." This demand for faith is not a simple belief in Him as their Master. That faith they had attained. They would not have been with Him, when others had forsaken Him and fled, if they had not believed in Him. They had followed Him to the last, when there were no earthly prospects to attract them to Him. They believed in Him so emphatically that with Thomas they were willing to affirm that they would die with Him.

But Jesus made a greater demand for faith than that attitude throughout His ministry. He declared that, as devout Jews they had a clear and undoubting faith in the God of their Fathers and in His promises, so now they were to trust Him as they trusted God. They were to think of Him as they thought of God. They were to think of God in all time to come as they thought of Jesus. In this stupendous claim to an equality with God Jesus was presenting the

objective of the Christian faith in a twofold way.

It was for one thing an intellectual conception. It was not the way of Jesus to teach the spiritual truths, concerning Him and His Father, in abstract propositions. Here His appeal for Himself as the object of faith carries with it the inference which Paul affirmed in one of his master passages, "He thought it not a prize to be equal with God." The strengthening assurance and the comfort of such a truth cannot be over-estimated. The spirit of Jesus is the spirit of God. The heart of Christ is the heart of God. The character of Christ is the character of God. Here is satisfied the profound craving of all the great souls of humanity to know God, to enter into the fullness of the truth of what God is, and into the assurance of His gracious fellow-feeling with us—all satisfied in Christ. The thought of the infinite God limiting Himself to finite conditions and acquainting Himself with the experience of weakness and mortality, is difficult to reason. Yet, when any sincere mind endeavours to conceive a nobler conception of God than this revealed in Jesus, he has to confess that the attempt is vain. The whole world to-day, which knows Jesus, comes to the hour of confession that

there is no personality more worthy of faith and worship, because more divine, than Jesus Christ, the Lord. "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father."

But it was not only an intellectual conception, but a moral discipline, to make Christ the object of faith. He was about to disappoint the expectations which they had cherished throughout the years of their discipleship. That wonderful promise of the Galilean days, three years ago, seemed to be a mere passing word. The day, which had dawned and climbed to high noon in splendour, was setting in the chaos and darkness of a night of gathering storm. It was not strange that misgiving and fear had begun to assert themselves, in spite of the confidence they still reposed in their Master. But He calls them to a constant faith by His supreme argument. "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." In the face of every inexplicable event, in the sheer disappointment of unrealized dreams, in the mental bewilderment of men whose outlook has altered, in the temptation to desert Him, they were to find that their faith in Him, as their faith in God, was the discipline of their wills. He had given them sufficient ground for this faith through His witness in time gone by, through His

wondrous dealing with their sins, through His deliverance from the fear and alienation of men who dared hardly trust God, as the God of their salvation. To face life now with such a faith was to find themselves morally disciplined, until a courage that knew no fear and a loyalty that could pass on to death, were to be the features by which they were known to men. No matter through what tempestuous seas they had to pass their faith in this Lord Jesus, the divine Son of God, would enable them to weather the storm.

In all time, and to the end of time, this absolute acceptance of Christ as the Son of the Father, as the Saviour of men from their sin and in their sin, as the very revelation of the mind and will of God, with the assurance of Christ's sufficiency to meet every need and to bear every burden, is the secret source of victory and power and peace. Even when, as we pass through life, this acceptance of Christ may entail our facing of danger and of trial and of keen temptation, may lead us into mental and moral conflict, and cause us to pass through days of pain and anxiety and even doubt, which some may never know, yet when the whole horizon grows dark, to look up and to be assured, even when we cannot prove, that God

has been revealed in Christ, is to cross the threshold of a new world of faith. We may have to confess that we cannot see, because the light is dim. We may know that we have no language but a cry. But this is our certainty that we have no other refuge, and that we have found, on our pilgrim way, Jesus to be the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. The voice falls upon our ears, "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in me." In the end faith in the unseen and eternal, in a personal God who loves and cares, is a moral and spiritual exercise.

II

In the second place Jesus provides here for His disciples the source of their hope. "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." When we remember that death is the fate ordained for us all, and when we consider that the change which occurs at death is so conclusive in its issues, we do not wonder that questions continually haunt all thoughtful minds, and sometimes so vex and strain as to overshadow all our days. It seems strange at first thought that we should know so little of what awaits us after death. The conditions in which we shall find ourselves placed,

the scenes that will surround us, the occupations that may engross us, even the mode of our existence are all unknown. Speculation has made its guesses. Imagination has painted its manifold pictures—some of uplifting splendour, others of exquisite beauty, a few of coarse and unconvincing grossness, and others again made beautiful by the alluring tints of affection and hope. But after all that has been divined, or prophesied, our positive assurance is small. As Richard Baxter humbly wrote, "Our knowledge of that life is dim." As a still greater mind humbly confessed, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be."

It is to meet that blankness, and its consequent cheerless outlook and foreboding, that Jesus here provides the grounds of a hope, which is neither unintelligible, nor alien from those feelings and instincts which are fundamental in our nature. He touches the deepest chords of our anticipations and our desires when He speaks here of the Father and the Father's house. There is a Father, and a Father's house. In that house there are many abiding places awaiting God's children. So Jesus, about to bid them farewell, assures these gifted and enlightened spirits that He is going to His own true home, and to theirs.

That calm and clear and confident message is not mere poetry. It has its analogy in one of the simplest facts of the present life. We enter it by a birth, as little, weak, helpless children passing into a new world. We are incapable of providing for ourselves, and the world around us is new and strange. Yet in the providence of God, loving hearts and tender hands have prepared a home for us, and are waiting to receive us. We enter into its many abiding places, where our whole nature may be satisfied, if we will but keep its laws. So Jesus assures us here that it will be with us, when we pass on through the valley of the shadow of death, and pass in to the world of life. There is the true home-land, and the true home-life, and the Father's presence, with the pledge of its blessedness and continuance. To have a home, our own place in it, with congenial surroundings and a love which is rhythmic with harmony—that is the goal for which we all strive in the life that now is. Alas! Its realization too often retreats before us as we pass on through the years. Tender ties are snapped, and the conditions of security and peace are not fulfilled. Here we have no continuing city. But all that we yearn for—the love that will never fade or fail, the love for

which we feel we are made, the resting place from which we shall never be cast out, our own home, heart answering to heart,—that is where Jesus abides. As a man turns back in vivid memory, after a lifetime to the parental home which shielded his childhood, and as the dying, in the unconscious wanderings in the brain, visit again the scenes of early years, so the heart of the child of God creates the vision of the Father's home from the love and care of the home of his childhood.

As this great hope was presented to the disciples those natural doubts which all men feel arose within them. It is because men are tempted to think that these anticipations of a life to come are baseless, that Jesus adds His word, " If it were not so, I would have told you." He appears to guarantee these profoundest intuitions of humanity, and to declare that they are correct interpretations of the mind of God, as well as the inevitable conclusions of His own witness and gospel. For this going away, of which He speaks, had no other meaning or end than the preparation of such an eternal home for them. His going was of itself a pledge and a proof of its certainty. As He went, in the last acts of His incarnate life, His mediation and intercession were consummated on the

Cross. As He went, the mystery of the open heaven held their eyes. As He went, He fulfilled the promise of the outpouring of the Spirit, and not only revealed the heaven beyond, but begot both the hope and the desire of their heart. Such is the consolation of believing men for themselves, and for those dear to them, who die in the Lord. Not into some vague and dim land of shadows have they passed, or shall we pass. But to the Father's home and to the Father's heart, and to a life in a world, whose wonder and glory are above all we can ask or think.

One only duty emerges for men with this great hope. That is that we must have ourselves prepared for the place which is prepared for us. Only through such preparation can men cherish the hope, and only through such preparation, can they desire it. If you have no liking for the true home of the soul, if you have been giving your fears only the sedative of a vague forecast, you will indeed pass to your own place, but that cannot be to the Father's house. It is the simplest, most undeniable of truths, that if there be a Father's home, it must be reserved for those who have yielded themselves to Him and become His children. No obligation ought to be more imperative, or more

welcome than to make life, day by day, in its tasks and trials and troubles, in its joys and sorrows and loves, a pilgrimage to the gate of the Father's house. "As many as received Him, to *them* gave He power to become the sons of God."

III

The third object of Christ's disclosure here is to make His utterance the dynamic of love. Wide as is the view we are called upon to scan, and enthralling as is the revelation regarding things unseen, the personal element in these wonderful words is primary and predominant. "That where I am, there ye may be also." It is not heaven and its splendour, or even the home with its many places of desire. It is Jesus and His fellowship which is the supreme inducement. It is the Lord and His love which hold the Christian heart. We are all aware of the sneer of "other-worldliness." We have all listened to men who thought themselves superior, both in their conception of the world to come and in their attitude toward it, by scorning any motive drawn from its grace. But this sneer is impotent before this revelation of Christ. Jesus interprets the deepest need of the Christian heart, the supreme desire of

the believing soul, when He declares that that love, which He evoked in those men whom He called to Himself, would find its exercise ennobled and enraptured when they passed into the eternal presence and fellowship of their Lord. Heaven would be no object of desire apart from the presence of Him "who loved us and gave Himself for us." He alone makes heaven possible. "The Lamb is all the glory in Immanuel's land." A Christian man is one who has entered into a personal and a confessed relationship to God, through Jesus Christ. God is his Father not in any vague meaning of the word, but through faith in Jesus Christ, his Lord. Therefore the one uplifting emotion of the believer's heart, greater, as Paul affirmed, than faith or hope, is this love for Him Who redeemed him, and longs for that mystic communion with Him. As the believing man realizes that, through this Lord he has received the forgiveness of his sins, the words in which the significance of that truth has been expressed, thrill him with their music. He is "accepted in the beloved." He lives and yet not he "but Christ in him." All things "are become new." "Christ is made of God to him, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption." He comes more and more to realize

that Christ fixes and fills his mind, and takes larger room in his soul, just because Jesus is what He is, as Redeemer and Lord. As he passes on in life and faces its inevitable hardships, and passes through its tribulations, he recovers the strength of his will and the assurance of his desire, and he cries, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"

Can there be any more searching or solemn question for a man to put to himself than this which asks him, what his faith and hope and love centre upon? It is not fitting that many words be spoken regarding such a question, which should hush every one of us into a self-examining silence. The man who has not yet turned his face toward the Father's house, who has not yet stepped out on the way, with many companions, under the one Leader and Master of all, should begin to examine himself, and ask himself whence and whither his life is tending. But even the man who has been persuaded that the Father's house is a supreme reality, should examine himself, and should not abide in any mean content with a low consecration. He should hunger to have the desire to see God as he is, and to be satisfied with his likeness as that is revealed in Jesus, the Redeemer and Master of his soul.

XII: THE ATTITUDE OF THE CHURCH TO SOCIAL PROBLEMS

IN these pages I draw attention to the urgent problems of the Social Order, and to the attitude which the Church of Christ should assume towards them.

(1) THE DISTINCTIVE SPHERE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

There are those who regard these problems as strictly outside ecclesiastical lines. Cogent reasons can be given for refusal on the Church's part, as a corporate body, to allow herself to be dragged out of her own distinct sphere into the arena of debatable questions. It is never out of place, for instance, to insist that the outstanding duty and privilege of the Church is to proclaim to all men, as being all alike in need of, the glorious Gospel of her Lord. Her appeal is to the individual, whatever his outward circumstances may be. The Church does not believe that amelioration of these can either achieve, or take the place of, the New Birth, without

which a man cannot enter the Kingdom of God.

Nor does she commit herself to the creed that widespread material comfort will of necessity carry with it man's highest spiritual or moral welfare. Both rich and poor need to be reminded that man does not live by bread alone. On the contrary, the Church has had, as many a faithful ministry proves, too numerous instances of genuine Christian character surmounting the hardest lot, and of the hardest lot adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour, to permit her to identify mere welfare with well-being, or temporal prosperity with the Kingdom of God. The real joy of life is a monopoly of no class. Many of the happiest are to be found among the poorest who fear God, and bear a scanty exchequer with a patience and heroism that seem almost indispensable to the Church's witness to the power of Christ to transfigure the most cheerless conditions.

Further, it is wise that the Church should be jealous of her independence of all class prejudice and partisan spirit. She should be, what our Lord was and is, the friend of all sorts and conditions of men: their truest friend because bringing the illumination of heaven to bear on all human relations and interests: because entreating them to put first things first: to

seek first the righteousness of God's kingdom, and make all things beside subordinate. In short, the whole past history of the Church entitles her to hold that there is no outward state, however bare of earth's comforts, however adverse to higher influences, in which a man cannot be, or at least become a Christian and do the will of Christ; and she gives the place of supreme importance to the character of the man himself. I fully accept the terse dictum of a living authority, though not altogether accentuating it as he does, when he says: "The essence of the Social Problem is the soul."

But granting all this, which likely seems commonplace, and in a desire to approach the subject with all reserve, we ask, Has the Church no direct message to give in respect of the troubled social conditions of our day? Are there no lines of alleviation or conciliation or admonition, peculiar to herself, and along which she can move with the authority derived from the full consciousness that she is reflecting the mind of her Lord in an endeavour to restore confidence between the classes?

(2) THE PRESENT SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ORDER

I take for granted that no one cares to defend the existing social or economic order, in view of

the anomalies that spring from it, or at least are bound up with it. When, following our Lord's advice, we judge it by its fruits, it is condemned. The problem before us is not how we are to palliate evils, but how we are to deal with the causes that produce them. The question is, Is the present order of society, with its sharp and shocking contrasts, its poverty and its wealth, its East ends and its West ends, its hard and monotonous toil, its superfluity of idleness, its chronic clashing of interests, class against class, labour against capital, its monopolies of land and means of production, its seething, and frankly revolutionary discontent, is this a state of things from which we cannot escape, inseparable from man's progress in this world, or is it, and just because it brings such results in its train, essentially antagonistic to the will of Christ? Does the Church exhaust her duty in preaching contentment to those who suffer under such inequalities of life, and charity to those who enjoy life's sunshine?

Perhaps it is well at this stage to remind ourselves that a system may be radically unsound, while men involved in its operations may be personally upright, and unconscious of infraction of moral law. It is difficult to convince one who has achieved position or wealth by

assiduous industry, and maintained an unimpeachable integrity all through, that an economic order which favoured his opportunities is false in principle, and probably false in proportion to the extent to which he has himself benefited by it. It can be fairly said from this point of view that the rich are no more to be blamed than the poor. It is the evil in the system that enables the one to be rich and forces the other to be poor, riches and poverty being the counterpart of each other; for wherever wealth is great, poverty will be also great.

In the days within the memory of many of us when slavery still entangled the Southern States of America, many Christian masters treated their slaves with kindness, and did not believe that the relation implied was morally indefensible. The glaring anomaly was, strange to say, condoned and defended by the Churches of these States. They never protested against the evil in the name of Christ, but thought they did their duty in exhorting masters to be humane. I do not need to ask whether these Churches would have been travelling beyond their province had they testified against the social system which prevailed.

The inference is plain. Not because a state of things exists, and is accepted as inevitable

even by good men ; not because the law of the land throws its shield over it ; not because the entire social organization is involved in it, and interference might mean serious dislocation, amounting to a revolution or something akin to it, is it therefore to be approved. Complacent customs are too often rooted in complacent selfishness, or in complacent thoughtlessness at least. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

So we judge the economic order which makes unrestricted competition, unrestrained individualism to be the rule of the road, by its results. Surely it is not God's intention that the few should be at the top of the tree of life, sitting secure, and that the many should be struggling to get, or keep, a mere foothold on its lowest branches ; that men—I do not say of different nationalities, but men of the same race—should be hopelessly divided into castes estranged in sympathies, and in a relation of mutual suspicion and distrust, deepening into positive hostility.

If I may venture to intrude, for a moment, my own personal experience, it is this, that within the half-century (or nearly so) of my ministry in Glasgow, amid many indications of rapidly growing wealth on the one side, and, *possibly*, of increasing means of comfort on the other, to wage-earners as a whole (though higher

wages are countered by higher prices), there has been, to my judgment, I grieve to say, an ever-widening gap in both inward and outward respects between East end and West end.

I have no desire to exaggerate, and I shall be only too thankful to be convinced that I have formed a groundless induction. But if I am correct, if the facts bear me out in my contention, no earnest-minded Christian man among us can afford to overlook them.

Nor do I wish to depreciate the large amount of Christian and philanthropic effort in the Home Mission fields, blessed to the reclamation and upbuilding in the fear of God and self-respect of many individual men and women. But such Christian and philanthropic workers appear to me to be simply physicians and nurses tending the wounded on the field of battle. They are doing noble work. But what we want is : *no wounded*, and no battle to inflict wounds. We do not believe that God intended humanity to become a field for the never-ending struggle of the weak against the strong, of the war which is called work.

Nor do we overlook the sorrowful fact that a vast percentage of suffering is due to the follies and vices of individuals themselves, and is passed on to their children, who are the victims

of the law of heredity. If the millions wasted on strong drink, for example, were only diverted into channels of industry, the sources of many a stream of wretchedness would at once be dried up. Nor can we forget that, with all our desire to lessen hardship, and effect something in the direction of equalizing material comfort, human life has been constructed by its Author on broader lines than those affording an easy passage through it to the eternity of God. Thriftlessness and selfishness make this for many far harder than it need be, no doubt ; and many make it harder for themselves. Yet it is well for all of us to bear in mind that if we contrive to escape the implications of the Divine sanction for mankind in this world : " In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread," it is at the cost of forfeiting the very best qualities of manhood and womanhood.

(3) THE MORAL LEADERSHIP OF THE CHURCH

But with these reservations, I cannot see that the Church ought to view this unhappy condition of things with equanimity, and abstain from pronouncing the social and economic order that produces it to be contrary to the will of Christ. It is judged by its fruits. A society rent by conflicting forces is hardly a Christian

ideal. And simply to pick up the fallen, Christ-like though that be, is hardly exhaustive of the high calling of the Church to be the salt of the earth. The Church can afford to regard with composure the reproaches cast on her, such as: fear to alienate influential sections of the community; ignorance that an anti-church, if not an anti-religious, sentiment, is one of the forces of the day to be reckoned with in movements of the masses; or the criticism that she is really stranded on the sands of the past, a beautiful and interesting object, but with an ever-decreasing influence on thinking men.

One thing, however, the Church of Christ cannot afford to do: she cannot permit her moral leadership to go by default. Ambition for leadership, in one sense, is vain. The Church leads simply by proclaiming the will of the Lord in so far as she is able to interpret it, and bring it to bear on the varied human interests of the day, and to testify against whatever seems to her to transgress that will, even though law and custom condone it.

In point of fact, the question whether it is expedient that the Church should step across the bounds of her proper sphere in faith and morals has been already decided. After considerable hesitation, it is true, but not too soon, she threw

the whole weight of her influence into the scale of total abstinence, and in her courts and pulpit protests against the degradation and scandals of the liquor traffic. Recently the Wesleyan Conference, and the Council of the Free Churches of England, have gone a step further in the direction of economic interest, and, in view of the sacredness of the individual life, and conditions of industry involving want and misery to the workers, they have passed resolutions expressly in favour of the demand for a living wage. So I venture to ask if the time has not come for the Church of Christ—as a whole—to make a further advance on the same track?

The Church has a right to do so, for one thing, because concern for the interests of Christ does not lay patriotism on the shelf. Religion and patriotism go hand in hand. It is surely not beyond her province to consult for the highest well-being of land and people. She would not stand in line with the old prophets of Israel, or even be a sympathetic exponent of their trenchant utterances, if she declined to deal with a social order that bore hard on the great mass of men and women under it. Is it nothing to our own Scottish Churches, for example, that thousands of our youth, whom Scotland can least spare, driven from the countryside, annually

forsake our shores, or congest the labour market in cities, in despair of a future of hope under existing proprietary rights, which neither in past origin, nor in present use, can be justified?

She has a right to do so, for another thing. Healthy outward conditions may do less spiritually for the individual who is in them, than the individual—especially the individual with Christ in his life—may do for the unhealthy outward conditions in which he has been set. But it would be shutting our eyes to the humiliating and ghastly spectacles thrust on us both in town and country, if we refused to admit that outward conditions drag down, and keep down, many a man and woman who has not the strength of will to resist the degrading influences that surround them. So that as things often are, the wonder is that there can be any who do otherwise than succumb to drunkenness and vice, with poorly remunerated, unhealthy and uninteresting toil, indecent housing, lack of steady employment and depressing surroundings, making the path to these abominations easy.

The Church has a right to interfere for still another reason. From her own particular point of view, it is a grave obstacle to the success of the Gospel of Christ's redeeming love which she carries in her hands, when those who appeal for

justice, for fairer treatment, for a larger share in the good things this world has to offer (and which they are themselves the means of procuring), and for release from social servitude, turn to her and ask : Are these the fruits of the Gospel of human brotherhood you preach, when you tell us : " One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren " : " Whoso will be great among you let him be your minister " : " Even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve " ?

It is hardly possible to doubt that the growing indifference to Church ordinances of a considerable proportion of the working class has behind it the suspicion that the churches are not fearlessly acting out their creed ; that they shrink from the direct application of the ethics of the Gospel to the principles on which the economic order rests, and fail to express a practical interest in matters of such vital moment to them.

To put it plainly, I suspect that there are many who believe that we, ministers, are afraid to say all we think. Perhaps the charge is true : perhaps we have been too backward in challenging social unrighteousness. But, I am persuaded, less because of selfish, and more because of justifiable fears, lest we venture into a domain beset with baffling problems. In the exigencies

of a complex industrial system, where anomalies abound, the lines of right and wrong cannot always be sharply drawn. It is a domain, besides, with which in its strictly economic aspects we are not likely to be familiar.

There are also fears, not unjustifiable, lest on the natural impulse to side with the weak, we commit ourselves to positions which larger experience might prove untenable, and so forfeit the vantage ground which the Gospel of conciliation we are entrusted with confers, to urge humanity on the one side, and moral consideration on the other.

Yet who will venture to deny that Social Reform stands in closest connection with Religion, or that economic problems are constantly confronting us in the shape of moral problems, so that silence may be, equally with speech, liable to misconstruction? It is much easier, we confess, to diagnose the disease than to prescribe the remedy; and possibly, in some respects, prescription is hardly the Church's function. At least the Church can say: Such and such things are wrong; they contradict the spirit of Christ; they traverse the fundamental principles of our faith; even though she may be unable to indicate how they are to be put right. The State has something to do, and is

becoming more and more alive to the fact. The individual Christian has something to do; and the Church herself has something to do.

For one thing, it is clear enough that the Church of Christ is bound to maintain that the entire social order ought to rest on, and reflect, the law of human brotherhood proclaimed by her Lord. She is also bound to maintain that the motives, applicable to the individual in his personal relations, ought to be applicable to the system under which he works, and for which he has his own share of responsibility.

This is indeed nothing but what we pray for each time we repeat the words: "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." That is not meant for the millennium, but for this present day in which we live; and no millennium will ever come unless we begin to make it come here and now.

(4) THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE SOCIAL ORDER

The standard is unmistakable. The unity, the harmony, the co-operation, the same care one of another, the preference one of another in honour, the love, that characterize the family, are its supreme features. Unless we are prepared to take up the ground that what is the law of Christ for the individual is not, on that

account, law for the corporate whole, the conclusion is inevitable. Human brotherhood ought to be, in its essential principles, and in all its implications, reproduced in our social and economic system.

Is this so? It cannot be so, when the fundamental axiom of our public life is individualistic, every one for himself; and when the universally sanctioned motive is to better oneself, to "get on" in the world: to rise into a grade of society superior to that from which one starts. The net result is that life is measured by a money value, the usual spectacle presented being the exact antithesis of that which would be afforded, if men believed with all their hearts in the truth of our Lord's commanding principle: "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

We do not say that men, without exception, think of nothing but of doing well for themselves, irrespective of what happens to the community in general. There *are* sordid motives, no doubt. Fortunes are amassed by means which no subsequent generosity to church or charity can ever condone; and we need not be surprised if the labouring classes, who know the facts, pass their own damaging comments on a liberality so spurious. But there are praise-

worthy ambitions. There is the natural delight felt in growing capacities and in widening spheres of influence for good. Even under so questionable a social system, it is scarcely needful to add, philanthropy, charity, self-sacrifice, humane and brotherly instincts abound.

We know that there are men in our mercantile and industrial worlds who do their best to carry the spirit of Christ into all their relations with their employees and business rivals, and by many acts of goodwill and humanity show how they feel that these are "less than the discount of the interest of the debt due by the wealthy to the poor." And yet, it is pathetic to hear these very men at times apologetic for lines along which they are reluctantly compelled to move, because "business is business"; they are caught in the swirl of the stream, and believe that self-defence necessitates means for which they personally have little liking.

Further, it may be with some show of reason contended that when an individual does the best for himself, he is most likely to do the best for the community in which he lives. So that if the inducement of personal advancement were withdrawn, the chief motive for industry, energy, battling with life's circumstances, in short, the main condition of human progress, would cease to exist.

Something in all these contentions we admit, *as things are.* With the light of Jesus Christ's example shining overhead, even in the order of things most reprehensible, there cannot fail to be alleviations of its severity. "In Great Britain," wrote an eminent Continental thinker, more than half a century ago, "where social conditions point to the need for a revolution more than in other countries, there is the least desire for it." He confesses his inability to account for that. We can perhaps account for it. We ascribe that disinclination largely to the solvent forces of the Gospel, acting at once on both ends of the social scale; restraining, on the one hand, an unlicensed and selfish exercise of power, and checking, on the other, the risings of discontent among the hewers of wood and drawers of water, and teaching patience and submission to what is taken, in hardship, as the will of God.

Does then the social disintegration of the present day, as contrasted with fifty years ago, prove that the Gospel has forfeited its former influence on the community? Although I do not doubt that the tone of modern thought, and the decay of hard and fast dogmatic religious beliefs, have both led to a freer attitude on the part of many, I should be sorry to be driven to

that conclusion ; nor do I think that the facts of the case, serious as they are, warrant it.

On the contrary, may it not be that the growing brightness of gospel light is bringing into greater prominence the dark spots in our social system, and accentuating the remarkable contrast between the ethics generally acted on, if not approved, and the ethics of Jesus Christ ? Many who demand that this contrast shall cease, do not, we admit, do so in His Great Name, but in the name of justice, liberty, and humanity. After all, these are not an anti-Christian code, although Christ's Spirit fills them with a fullness otherwise unknown ; and the more the Gospel shines in its own uncoloured light, consciously or unconsciously affected by it, men will put the question : Is this society of ours in harmony with His will ? Many a truth is obscured by being held in a merely conventional fashion ; and among these none suffers, or has suffered more than that of the brotherhood of men in Christ. I say " in Christ," because it is of the duty and attitude of the Church and of Christian men that I am speaking, and of these only. We have held the doctrine of the brotherhood of men, no doubt, yet rather as a pious opinion, than as a truth with urgent practical issues.

Every Jew confessed that he was bound to

love his neighbour as himself; but not every Jew, hardly one Jew, would have thought that his neighbour was the man who came across his path, and needed his help—not until Christ came and defined a neighbour in such terms.

So the Church is waking up to ask herself whether the existence of monotonous and grinding toil with poverty, in the heart of the wealthiest civilization the world has known, is reconcilable with the admitted duty of loving our neighbour as ourselves. Surely it will not need the efforts of Hindu propagandists to exploit this contrast, as the legitimate and necessary fruit of Christianity, to impress on her the conviction that slavery itself was no darker offence against the law of human brotherhood than the abject condition of millions, to whom the inexorable economic order brings little, or probably no chance in life at all. The time may come when the present system of wage-earning shall seem as out-of-date, perhaps as anti-Christian, as slavery seems to-day.

(5) THE FUNDAMENTAL LAW OF A CHRISTIAN SOCIETY

We must maintain, therefore, that the fundamental law of Christian ethics, brotherly love and mutual service, shall be the basis on which

our social system is to be reconstructed. And if we are met with the objection that, in that case, personal interest, the strongest motive for industry, inventiveness, toil of hand or head, would be frustrated, it is enough to remind ourselves on the best authority that love is the most powerful of all motives, human and divine; and that a community where personal superiority ceased to be the dominating aim or reward, where the mutual service of brotherly love was universal; where the gifted followed Christ's law—"the greatest shall be your servant,"—and where the least gifted, faithful to the talents they possessed, should not be shut out from the good things of God, now the monopoly of wealth and position; one, in short, where each was for all and all for each, where if one suffered or rejoiced, all shared the joy or suffering, such a community would be, in contradiction to what now obtains, truly that which we daily pray God to bring about when we say: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Let me ask, Is the hope of making wealth, or a position, absolutely essential to the calling out of the very best energies of a man? Is this chaos of competing interests—these two camps of misunderstanding, capital against labour, and labour against capital, firm against firm,

man against man, which results from such an aim—our inevitable social ideal and goal? As the disciples of Christ, that is precisely what we cannot afford to grant. Even Plato held higher views of a community than this. To him as to an inspired writer, "the love of money was the root of all evil." As we know, in his ideal Republic, amassing wealth was to be forbidden; and the lesson is inculcated by a modern disciple of the great Greek, F. D. Maurice, when he laid down the canon: "You must either socialize Christianity or Christianize socialism."

If anything ought to be, and may be, a passion of holy enthusiasm, if anything should make life interesting, exhilarating, and worth living, it is the thought of serving our generation by doing the will of God, of subordinating private ends to the common ends, of rising above the sordid maxims to which men are ready to have recourse on the plea that success in life is not otherwise possible; it is the resolve that our aim shall be, not what we are to get from society, but what we are to give to it. *That* constitutes true life. For, love, the love of Christ, the love of fellow-men in Christ, and for Christ's sake, lies behind it.

I have spoken of the claims made in the name of justice and liberty. The name of charity

has lost its charm. It is made too often a pillow for an uneasy conscience. Men are demanding their rights, and will not have charity. Their outlook is rapidly widening through education alone, not to take into account ethical and religious influences. A brighter horizon is beginning to dawn on them. They are asking, Why should life mean *this* for me and *that* for you; and for my part, I have no answer to give that satisfies my own judgment, much less my conscience. They demand that the conditions of human existence be reasonable. The existing state of things seems to do more than justify their demand. I quote from a source that is reliable:—"The working wage-earner is not satisfied of the reasonableness of the enormous and constant inequality between the wage he receives and the income enjoyed either by the owners of the instruments of production, or by the managers and agents who rule his life, especially where profits are large. This inequality of income results in a society in which one-tenth of the population owns nine-tenths of the accumulated wealth; one-fifth of the adults take two-thirds of the annual product, and allow one-third to be shared among the four-fifths of wage-earners, in which, in spite of a wealth production greater than the world has ever known,

one-third of these wage-earners have scarcely a bare subsistence ; while most of the other two-thirds are so little removed from this low level, that the slightest dislocation of industry reduces many of them to destitution. In dramatic contrast with this penury and destitution, he sees hundreds of thousands of wealthy families wasting in idleness and senseless extravagance millions of pounds annually, out of the wealth produced." The writer's inference is modest but cogent : " Something is radically wrong with a society that produces this inequality. . . . Things cannot be as they are."

I believe that every Christian man, with a quickened social conscience, must admit that the inference is not overstrained. If those into whose hands the lion's share of this wealth falls were as a rule to show a wise and unselfish use of it, I believe that the condition of things, though economically and inherently unsound, would not excite the irritation and restiveness in the minds of wage-earners, which it now does. But the spectacle of growing self-indulgence, ostentation, display, the luxury which means waste and raises a false ideal—following hard on growing wealth—is offensive, inflames men's minds, fills them with a sense of resentment, and precipitates action which men are otherwise

slow to take. Or, if they are restrained, it is not through contentment with their lot, but simply because the rigorous necessities of the case, the struggle to win daily bread for themselves and their families, render them powerless and hopeless of change for the better. "The example of the rich is one cause of the poverty of the poor."

We devoutly wish that we could believe that the relations between employers and employed have been improving, but the contrary appears to be the case, and seems inevitable from various causes such as these: the substitution of pecuniary for personal bonds; the replacing of masters by impersonal syndicates; the keenness of business competition; the effacing of humanity by the desire for cheap production (which involves all of us who want to buy cheap), and the often degrading conditions of toil; the indisposition of capital to share its gains proportionately with the labour that makes them; and the fact that the wage-earning class, in by far the greater majority of instances, have had to fight for every betterment they have obtained. How can we expect another result than discontent springing from a sense of injustice? And how can the Church remain silent, and withhold her sympathy, when men ask, Is this according to the mind of your Master?

(6) THE OUTLOOK TO-DAY

I do not see how the Church can be content with a passive neutrality, not because she attributes too much to outward betterment, though it would be foolish to ignore that factor, but because she is bound to contend that it is lowering and morally wrong to make the production of material wealth the standard of national prosperity, ignoring the quality of the men who make it. For, as wealth accumulates, men decay. And because she is bound to protest against that idolizing of property which tends to make our markets, our exchanges, and our factories, with alarming rapidity, the shrines of her daily worship.

"Our entire industrial system," writes one, "is to a large extent the creation of avarice and hardness of heart." If there be truth in that —discount whatever of exaggeration you please —I would rather hear the charge made by the Church of Christ than by one who stands outside, and puts humanity where we would put Christ; I would rather have the Church err in standing for the justice and the brotherhood required by her Lord, than allow the advocacy of a social and economic order based on the instincts of a true humanity, and on the ethics inculcated by her Lord, to be hesitating and dubious.

In the ancient commonwealth of the Jews these questions were not unknown. A code of laws regulating labour was drawn up, when the manna was given by God. Each man had to work for his living, by gathering manna enough for the day for himself and his family. But it was recognized that all were not equally capable; and in order to prevent, on the one hand, greed, and on the other, hardship, it was provided and guarded that the very same amount be allotted to each person—no more to the vigorous and no less to the weak. "He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack." The only use to which the vigorous could put his superfluity was to put it as he gathered it into the basket of his less capable brother or sister. For otherwise he got no use of it whatever for himself. That was a fair distribution of the means of livelihood; and no man could infringe it by cheating the laws of God. Men cannot cheat God's laws now any more than they could then, although results are not so immediately obvious. But it needs no prophet to interpret the facts and experiences of life, as these come under daily observation.

And there is the demand for liberty. Even in the great republic of the west, strange as it may seem, this demand has arisen, and is being

encouraged by representative organs of Christian sentiment. Wage-earning men, it is said there as it is said here, may be *politically* free and independent; *socially* they are slaves. They sell their labour, but the sale is a forced sale. They have no power to place their own value on the only commodity they have to barter; they have to take what employers are pleased to give them; and a combine of employers is more formidable in the long run than a combine of the employed.

Employers plead that they, in turn, are ruled by market prices, by the law of supply and demand. They are right, no doubt. The economic order presses on them, as on those who are under them.

I skirt here a province which I have not explored. And I frankly confess my incompetence to deal with it as I would like. But one thing I am sure of, I would trust my own Christian instincts sooner than all the volumes of economic lore issued from the press, or than all the traditions in business sanctioned by experience and custom. And I say that a system which hinders masters and men from meeting each other on equal terms, with the conviction that their mutual interests are not antagonistic but identical; a system in which market value is one thing, and human value another, in which

market demand is one thing and human need another, leads to nothing more or less than a practical servitude. Then the worth of human life is expressed in coin: men and women are regarded as means, not as ends; the opportunity to make the best of themselves, to enjoy all that is worth enjoying in life, to rise to the level of true, intelligent, self-respecting manhood and womanhood, is virtually denied to them. They are held captive in an iron, remorseless economic system; and I ask: Can the Church, which claims to be the mouth-piece of Him who said—"It is not the will of My Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish," asserting the inestimable worth of the individual, a new ideal for society, and a new view of social duty; can the Church, I ask, pass by on the other side, and turn a deaf ear to their claims? Can she afford to take up the ground that this is a province outside her proper sphere? Can she shelter herself under the often misinterpreted words of our Lord, "Man, who made Me a judge, or a divider over you?" forgetting that she can appeal, as Christ could not, to a conscience in society enlightened by centuries of Gospel exposition, and can ask men and women who believe in Christ to judge by the light that shines on them whether a social

organization that permits such results ought to be perpetuated? Has the time not come for the Church, in the name of Christ and of humanity, I do not say to abandon the alleviation of consequences, but I do say to begin to insist on the eradication of the cause which leads to them? Only so shall we prevent this great and blessed task from falling into hands that are not, alas! grasping the crucified hands of Christ, and prove that the Church, with all her failures, is still the representative, in the fullest significance, of Him who washed His disciples' feet that they might wash one another's feet; of Him who said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

We are all praying for a spiritual revival: please God it may come. Perhaps the Lord sees that our need for an ethical revival, for a social order rebuilt on the foundation of righteousness, and with the mercy that characterized Himself, is—I shall not say greater—equally great. It would only be in harmony with the sublime utterance of the prophet Isaiah, if indeed I ventured to say, that it is the indispensable preliminary to a spiritual revival. "Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. *Come now* and

let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." The spiritual will follow the ethical. Again, we touch here one reason at least, for the comparative indifference to the Church and her ordinances which we all deplore. We lose by it, and so do those who are estranged.

Might not some heart-felt expression of sympathy with our toiling brothers and sisters in their justifiable impatience under a hard yoke, and in their aspirations for a social order in which human brotherhood would mean more than a name, be fruitful in drawing them closer to Him in whom alone the bond of brotherhood is securely fastened, and through obedience to whose will alone the golden age of true liberty, equality, and fraternity shall one day be realized?

What if through all the present seething discontent, social disquiet, labour unrest, woman's agitation for the recognition of her rights in every department of life (with which I venture to think, in spite of erratic and deplorable misdeeds, few of us disagree), what, if through all this, it is possible to hear a voice crying: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord! Make His paths straight!"? What if all this be but the heralding of a fresh spiritual advent of our Lord in aspects of His Person and Work not yet done

justice to in the unexhausted forces of His Gospel, not yet even understood by His Church ? The Christ of to-day is the Christ of yesterday ; but to-day is not yesterday. Its problems, its questions, its outlook, its aspirations are not those of yesterday. And Christ is a living Lord, with a living will, in whom the Church abides only as she sets herself to find in His unsearchable riches the satisfaction and solution of the needs of to-day. It is not an easy task. But then, abiding in Christ for the individual, or for the Church, is not an easy task. It means trouble, heart-searching and pain. The interpretation of Christ's will is ever a burden ; and no true interpreter will desire to escape it. And if the social disintegration of the hour appears to be, being interpreted, an overturning of the things that ought to be shaken, that He may come whose right it is to reign, in a wider outpouring of His Spirit, and in a quickening of the Christian conscience, then we shall thank God for the discontent. We shall even pray that it may deepen, because we believe that out of the storm there shall emerge the true Spirit of the storm, One walking over its tumultuous waves, and with the words upon His lips, " It is I ; be not afraid ! "

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